

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Farmers in Georgia and Ontario relate their struggles

— PAGE 5

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 63/NO. 6 FEBRUARY 15, 1999

Washington steps up military moves against Yugoslavia, Iraq

NATO plans occupation force in Kosova

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The U.S.-led NATO military alliance has moved closer toward military intervention in Kosova, with plans to deploy up to 30,000 imperialist troops as an occupation force there. Anticipating a possible military onslaught, Washington demanded February 1 that the "Kosovo Verification Mission" of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) move its training center immediately to Skopje, Macedonia, and prepare for a rapid evacuation of 1,070 "monitors" in Kosova in the event that NATO launches airstrikes against Yugoslavia. NATO commanders are assembling up to 10,000 soldiers to "extract" the monitors, the *Economist* reported January 30.

The White House has issued war threats and other political pressure to force Belgrade and Albanians who are fighting for independence from Yugoslavia to swallow a U.S.-sponsored settlement that includes "a high degree of self-governance" for the Kosovar Albanians. "We stand ready to back that strategy with the threat of force," declared U.S. president William Clinton.

The so-called Contact Group on the Balkans made up of government representatives from Britain, the United States, France, Italy, Germany, and Russia, adopted the U.S. "peace plan" January 29. They called for a meeting by February 6 in Rambouillet, France, to attend talks chaired by the British and French foreign ministers. The group set February 19 as the deadline for agreeing to the scheme or face NATO military strikes. Moscow is the only member of the Contact Group opposed to a military assault.

Germany: metalworkers hold protest strike



Some 200,000 metalworkers across Germany participated in brief strikes January 29, double the number the union officials had expected. The job action affected companies in 13 of 16 German states. The strikes, which lasted up to one day, are intended to serve warning to the employers' association, which is refusing the union's demand for a 6.5 percent wage increase. If negotiations do not progress, the union projects full strike action March 1.

Bombing intensifies in Iraq

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The Clinton administration is waging a war of attrition against Iraq, with almost daily attacks on Iraqi defense installations. Over the last month, U.S. and British warplanes have struck more than 40 sites there. United Nations officials said February 3 they were ordering U.S. and British staff members to leave Iraq.

Two F-14s and two F/A-18s bombed a missile site in southern Iraq February 2 that Pentagon officials claim could have threatened U.S. warships in the Arab-Persian Gulf. There were no indications that the Iraqi forces were preparing to attack. "We're...taking out [Iraqi] air defenses, piece by piece," gloated one Pentagon official.

Two days earlier U.S. and British warplanes bombed a communications in Talil and a radio relay station in Al Amarah after an Iraqi jet flew into the southern "no-fly zone" imposed by Washington. That same day U.S. aircraft fired a missile at a radar facility in northern Iraq near Mosul.

Last week, U.S. national security adviser Samuel Berger announced that President William Clinton had given U.S. pilots broader authority to bomb Iraq any time and place they choose. Whenever Baghdad does anything to displease Washington, "they're going to pay a penalty for it," said William Cohen, the U.S. war secretary.

During the month of January Washington has stepped up its daily flights to impose the so-called no-fly zones that cover two-thirds of the country.

There are now some 200 U.S. warplanes patrolling the southern "no-fly" zone and roughly 40 patrolling the northern "no-fly" zones. London has about 24 jets flying over Iraq.

Farmers fighting to keep their land meet in North Carolina to plan rally

BY SAM MANUEL AND STU SINGER

DURHAM, North Carolina — "Until I came to this meeting, I felt I was all alone in carrying on this fight. But looking around at all these other people here, I see we are in this together, I'm not alone." That was the

comment of North Carolina farmer B. J. Switzer at the North Carolina state meeting of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA), held here January 30.

The 80 farmers participating were from all over North Carolina, plus a delegation from the Virginia BFAA chapter. The meeting opened with a well-attended news conference where BFAA national president Gary Grant said, "This is a fight to the end for justice. The settlement is to fragment us. We have to remain together to fight."

The settlement he was referring to is the consent decree signed January 5 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and lawyers for the farmers in a lawsuit against racist government discrimination. That agreement goes before Federal District Court judge Paul Friedman in Washington, D.C., at a March 2 "fairness hearing" to either approve it or not approve it and continue the case in court.

The suit is known as *Pigford v. Glickman*, for North Carolina farmer Tim Pigford's initiative in suing U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Daniel Glickman. Farmers won a number of skirmishes in the case over the last year, especially the judge's ruling Oct. 9, 1998, that farmers who are Black constitute a "class... discriminated against on the basis of race" by the USDA. Growing numbers of farmers are speaking out against the proposed settlement of the case.

"There is nothing in this settlement to restore land to farmers who lost it. There is

no reprimand for any USDA officer. The same racist bigots will be there in the future when we apply for loans," Grant pointed out.

"We were brought here for agriculture," Grant declared. "It was Black farmers who sustained the civil rights movement. But our upper echelon thinks we're dirty — dirt farmers they call us. We've always been given crumbs. This time we want the whole

Continued on Page 4

The Truth about Yugoslavia

WHY WORKING PEOPLE SHOULD OPPOSE INTERVENTION

GEORGE FYSON, ARGIRIS MALAPANIS, AND JONATHAN SILBERMAN

Examines the roots of the carnage in Yugoslavia, where Washington and its imperialist rivals in Europe are intervening militarily in an attempt to reimpose capitalist relations. \$8.95



DISTRIBUTED BY PATHFINDER

Available from bookstores listed on page 16

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW

❖ A sea change in working-class politics

Linking up with the past, present, and future of groups of vanguard workers and farmers in struggle Summary presentation at December 4-6 socialist conference and Young Socialists convention, from *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millenium* by Jack Barnes

— Page 7

❖ Report on district convention of Socialist Workers Party in New York and New Jersey

— Page 10

In New International no. 7

• Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq

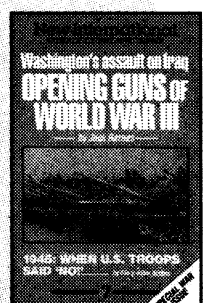
BY JACK BARNES

• 1945: When U.S. troops said "No!"

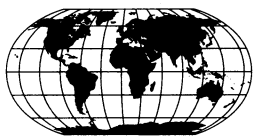
BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

• Lessons from the Iran-Iraq War

BY SAMAD SHARIF \$12.00



What sets difference in 'skilled,' 'unskilled' wages? — page 18



Colombians hit by earthquake

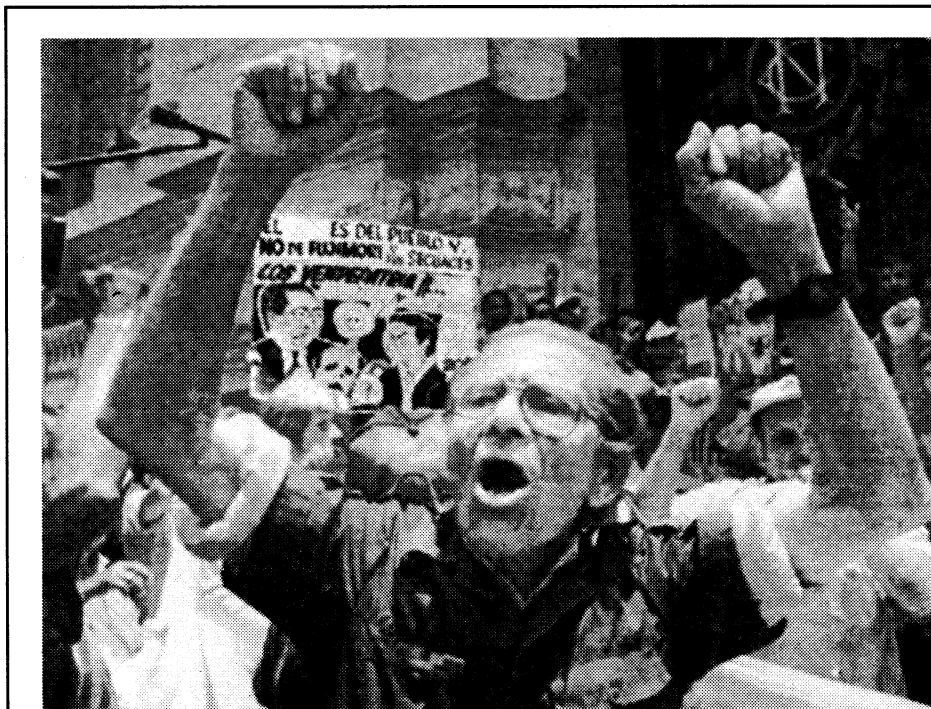
A major earthquake collapsed buildings in western Colombia January 25, leaving at least 200,000 people homeless. As of January 30, authorities reported 940 fatalities and 3,690 people injured. The death toll could reach much higher as rescue teams search the wreckage. Water, food, electricity, and shelter for survivors is grossly insufficient. President Andrés Pastrana promised \$12.6 million to rebuild homes and said the government sent 362 tons of relief supplies. But 150 tons of food are needed daily just in Armenia, the city hardest hit by the quake. And the government estimates it will take \$100 million just to rebuild collapsed homes.

In the name of combating thieves, President Pastrana by called a 30-day "economic emergency," sending 300 heavily armed cops and thousands of troops "to eliminate them from here and put them in prison." The aid allegedly sent by Bogotá has still not reached Armenia. "We've gotten nothing from the government," said resident Adalberto Valencia. Workers and peasants line up for hours at Red Cross and other aid stations only to find there is no food or medicine available. Some have begun to take the things they need from stores. The 4,000 troops deployed there opened fire on these people with live ammunition and tear gas. Soldiers seized food they claim had been looted by residents. More than 150 people have been arrested.

Brazil currency plunges further

The Brazilian currency, the real, has continued to plummet, hitting a new low of 2.06 reals to the dollar January 29, a 41 percent decline in two weeks. Brazilian officials are asking the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to speed up a \$9 billion loan, in hopes of bolstering the currency. To do this they are floating the idea of even sharper austerity measures — cuts in social services and increases in taxes — than had already been proposed. Government officials are also considering issuing billions of dollars in bonds that would be backed by the country's oil reserves, which would accelerate the sell-off of the national patrimony.

The crisis in Brazil impacts neighboring Argentina because Brazilian exports have



Retired workers took to the streets of Lima, Peru, in January to protest government plans to privatize social security. Despite the protest, which took place on the grounds of Congress, the legislators adopted the austerity measures.

become cheaper, and Argentine products more expensive. Auto production in Argentina is predicted to drop between 20 and 50 percent as a result. Nevertheless, the government of Argentine president Carlos Menem is insisting it will keep the Argentine peso pegged at a one-to-one exchange with the U.S. dollar. Menem even suggested eliminating the peso and using the U.S. dollar as the sole currency in Argentina.

S. Korean youth: 'U.S. out now!'

"Let's kick the U.S. out and unify our fatherland!" chanted 600 students at Hanyang University in Seoul, the south Korean capital, January 28. Students were demanding the expulsion of 37,000 U.S. troops they say block the unification of Korea. Protesters carried banners and posters denouncing Washington, and reportedly torched a U.S. flag and effigy of U.S. president William Clinton. Students responded with stones when police were sent to quell the protest. The

same day in Pusan, south Korea's second-largest city, more than 300 students rallied with similar demands. And in the southern city of Kwangju, 300 students who held an anti-imperialist rally at Chosun University were blocked from marching in the street. A smaller action took place in Taegu, reportedly organized by Hanchongryon, a student group banned for its pro-unification stance.

Japan-U.S. trade war sharpens

Tokyo is preparing to take Washington to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in retaliation for a lawsuit filed by the U.S. steel company Wheeling-Pittsburg against three Japanese companies exporting steel to the United States. Wheeling-Pitt bosses contend large imports of hot-rolled steel from Japan were "dumped" onto the U.S. market,

causing them fiscal injury. Trade officials from Japan say the suits against Itochu, Marubeni, and Mitsui — filed under the U.S. Antidumping Act of 1916 — are in violation of established WTO import-export rules. U.S. officials threaten that unless steel imports from Japan decrease they may employ domestic anti-import laws. In December Tokyo steel exports onto the United States dropped 47 percent — the first monthly decline in more than a year.

Meanwhile, the Japanese economy continues to worsen. Industrial production for 1998 sank 6.9 percent, the sharpest drop in 23 years. Retail sales declined 4.7 percent and domestic vehicle production fell 8 percent. Shipments of industrial goods dropped 6.5 percent — the first fall in five years and the largest since 1975. Japan's hobbling banking industry also took blows in late January as Moody's Investors Service Inc. downgraded the senior debt ratings of Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi, Sumitomo Bank, and Sanwa Bank, saying loans were defaulting faster than these banks could write them off.

Students strike in Togo

Students at the University of Benin began an indefinite strike in mid-January to protest conditions at the school. Student stipends, which are paid out sporadically, "have been the same for 21 years," said student council president Alphonse Late Lawson-Helu. "It's really a pittance. The cost of living has gone up tremendously, not to mention educational documents and other services, which have become more expensive." Other demands include provision of 20 buses, improved meals at the university restaurant, cleaning up campus grounds, and rehabilitation of the theater and library.

Students say the school, now holding 16,000 students, was built for 6,000. Delphine Lare, a student there said government officials' children "do not go to the same schools we do.... We are determined to make our demands heard, whatever the price we have to pay."

—BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

Imperialism has lost the Cold War

Striking miners in Romania are another haunting reminder for the imperialists that in not a single country where toilers ousted the capitalist class have social relations been overturned. The 'Militant' provides irreplaceable coverage of the struggles of workers in the workers states to defend their conquests. Don't miss a single issue!



SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

☐ \$10 for 12 issues

RENEWAL

☐ \$15 for 12 weeks

☐ \$27 for 6 months

☐ \$45 for 1 year

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION

PHONE

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT, 410 WEST ST., NEW YORK, NY 10014.

12 weeks of the Militant outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, \$A15 • Britain, £7 • Canada, Can\$15 • Caribbean and Latin America, \$15 • Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, £8 • Belgium, 500 BF • France, FF80 • Iceland, Kr1,500 New Zealand, NZ\$15 • Sweden, Kr75 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

2,000 Steelworkers rally for new contract at Newport News shipyard

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Some 2,000 members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 8888 rallied outside the massive shipyard in Newport News, Virginia, January 26 as a show of unity in preparation for the upcoming fight for a new contract. The sheer size of the protest halted traffic by the plant for 45 minutes, according to the local paper.

"We are for real this time," said Eddie Garris, a welder with 27 years in the shipyard. The current contract, which covers about 10,000 workers, expires April 4. The Steel-

workers haven't had an across-the-board pay increase since their 1991 contract.

"We've got the older people and the younger people coming together," commented Larry Washington, a 17-year employee at the yard. Twenty years ago USWA Local 8888 conducted a successful organizing drive at the shipyard despite the antiunion "right-to-work" laws in Virginia. An ensuing militant strike in 1979 won the workers their first union contract.

Brian Williams is a member of USWA Local 2609 in Sparrows Point, Maryland.

The Militant

Vol. 63/No. 6

Closing news date: February 4, 1999

Editor: NAOMI CRAINE

Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS

Editorial Staff: Megan Arney, Hilda Cuzco, Martin Koppel, Argiris Malapanis, Brian Taylor, and Maurice Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in December and biweekly from July to August by the Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax (212) 924-6040.

The Militant can be reached via CompuServe at: 73311.2720 or via Peacenet at: themilitant Internet: 73311.2720@compuserve.com or: themilitant@igc.apc.org

The Militant can be accessed on the internet at: gopher://gopher.igc.apc.org:11/pubs/militant

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Subscriptions: United States: for one-year subscription send \$45 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year-sub-

scription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80. Asia: send \$80 drawn on a U.S. bank to 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Canada: Send Canadian \$75 for one-year subscription to Militant, 4581 St. Denis, Montreal, Quebec H2J 2L4.

Britain, Ireland: £36 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution, 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL, England. Continental Europe, Africa, Middle East: £40 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution at above address. France: Send FF420 for one-year subscription to Militant, Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris; chèque postale: 40 134 34 U. Belgium: BF 2,400 for one year on account no. 000-1543112-36 of IMei Fonds/Fonds du 1 mai, 2140 Antwerp. Iceland: Send 5,400 Icelandic kronur for one-year subscription to Militant, P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavik. Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark: 500 Swedish kronor for one year. Pay to Militant Swedish giro no. 451-32-09-9. New Zealand: Send New Zealand \$75 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand. Australia: Send Australian \$75 to P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 1240, Australia. Pacific Islands: Send New Zealand \$75 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant's views. These are expressed in editorials.

Meatpackers vote to end strike in Toronto

BY GEORGE STURCOTTE

TORONTO — Workers at Quality Meat Packers voted January 29 to end their eight-week strike. Of the 80 percent of workers who voted, 68 percent voted to accept the six-year contract.

The same contract, with a few minor differences, was rejected two weeks earlier by a 58 percent majority. The contract includes wage cuts of up to Can\$6 per hour (US\$4), with laborers, the lowest paid workers, taking the biggest cut in pay. Overtime premiums, formerly paid after eight hours worked in a day, will only kick in after 42 hours worked in the week. The initial contract offer by the company proposed paying overtime premiums after 44 hours. In addition, the agreement eliminates long-term disability insurance.

Luis Teixeira, who has worked at Quality Meats 11 years, waited along with dozens of others to hear the result of the vote. He told the *Militant* the contract was "a disgrace to humanity." Quality Meat is "cutting our legs and arms and pushing us up against the wall."

The pattern for the Quality Meat concessions was established last year when 900 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers lost a four-month strike against similar wage givebacks at food giant Maple Leaf Foods. The Quality Meat contract originally expired at the same time. But workers there voted to give the employers a one-year extension of the contract. During their strike, many Quality Meat workers expressed the view that this was a big mistake that weakened both their fights.

After the defeat at Maple Leaf, similar concessions were won by the employers at Fletcher Fine Foods.

Under the pressure of this concession pattern, most workers at Quality Meat said that even if they had to take the pay cut, they should fight to get the same signing bonus as the Maple Leaf workers. At Maple Leaf, workers received a minimum of \$10,000 for signing the contract.

At Quality, the workers rejected the employers' offer January 12, of a \$1,000 signing bonus, to be paid in December 1999 to those who returned to work. The offer also proposed paying workers the equivalent of the difference between their new wage and their current wage for a 12-week period. This would be paid in a lump sum.

The new offer keeps the signing bonus at \$1,000, but every worker is to receive it whether or not they return to work. The bosses also reduced the 12-week payment of the wage differential to 10 weeks.

Immediately after the January 12 contract rejection, the company also threatened to close the plant. Striker Harry Ponte said, "People were afraid of the shutdown of the plant. It was in the news."

Striker Jose Pereira added, "Some other people voted yes because they're just going to take the money [the signing bonus] and run. Because how can you work for another six years and only get 15 cents more. How can you take care of your family?"

In a letter sent to strikers calling for another vote on the contract, union officials echoed this threat. The letter explained the unanimous recommendation of the negoti-

Greece: 10,000 march against education cuts



Militant/Katy LeRougetel

"We'll occupy 'til the year 2,000!" chanted droves of high school and university students in Athens, Greece, January 28 during a 10,000-strong action to demand the repeal of a law restricting access to post-secondary education. Students, who have occupied hundreds of schools since November, were joined by teachers and construction workers. The General Confederation of Greek Workers called a four-hour work stoppage in support of the students. Teachers went on a 48-hour strike. Cops massed in nearly every side street, but no major incident was reported.

ating committee to accept the contract.

Many workers who opposed the contract were angry that the vote was called without a meeting to discuss the contract offer and that the negotiating committee was campaigning for a yes vote.

Both workers who voted for and against the contract told the *Militant* that it was important that they had waged a fight.

Ponte said, "I think it was worth it to go on strike. But last time we should have voted

yes.... If I had a part-time job it would be different. I would have been ready to stay on strike until the end of the year."

Pereira said he was proud that they had voted the contract down not once but twice. "For the next strike, maybe we'll reject the contract three times," he said.

Davi Sinde, a picket captain had advice for other workers facing a strike. "When you go on strike you can't get scared by the company. You need to keep on fighting."

Parliament is dissolved in Haitian government crisis

BY ERIC SIMPSON
AND ROLLANDE GIRARD

A severe governmental crisis marks Haiti today. Haitian president René Préal announced January 11 that according to the electoral law of 1995 under which it was elected, the parliament's term had expired and it was therefore dissolved. In a television address after a day of protests, Préal stated that he had assumed "full power." He is calling for an election in the next months.

The parliament, a plurality of whose members are from the Organization of People in Struggle (OPL), had rejected each of Préal's nominees for prime minister in the 19 months since OPL member Rosny Smarth resigned from that position in June of 1997. The OPL, which is hostile to former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, has demanded ministerial posts as a precondition for approving any candidate as prime minister. Préal's latest appointment, Jacques Edouard Alexis, who is the minister of education, has yet to announce his cabinet.

Préal served as prime minister under Aristide who was elected president by an overwhelming majority in the 1990 vote, in which 95 percent of the electorate participated. Aristide was overthrown 10 months later in a military coup, during which thousands of Haitians died. He was reinstated in 1994 by a UN occupation army of 20,000 troops dominated by Washington, after ongoing protests in Haiti and the United States against the coup.

In a U.S.-imposed deal with the coup leaders, Aristide only served as president until 1995, when Préal was elected for a five-year term. Those elections, held under conditions of foreign occupation, had only a 30 percent participation. Aristide is reported to plan to run for president in 2000, when Préal's term expires. Several hundred U.S. soldiers remain in Haiti today.

Throughout the day of January 11, demonstrators gathered outside the parliament building to support the dissolution of the parliament. At the same time members of the dissolved parliament were meeting inside under police protection. Some of the demonstrators burned tires while an antiriot unit of the national police threw tear gas at them and fired shots in the air. These protests and others reportedly paralyzed Port-au-Prince, Gonaïves and Saint Louis du Sud.

Tony Jeanthénor, a leader of the Miami Haitian rights group Veye-Yo, expressed the view held by many Haitians here when he said, "The Haitian people support Préal's move because the parliament is no good."

In his television address January 11, Préal appealed for calm. "Neither demonstrations nor the closing down of city halls will solve the problem," Préal said, calling instead for a national dialogue.

But protest actions by popular organizations close to the Lavalas movement, which is associated with Aristide, have continued around the country, demanding that city governments whose terms of office have expired vacate their posts. Demonstrators closed down and looted the mayor's office in Petit-Goâve January 14, detaining the mayor and charging his administration with waste and corruption. Late the day before, flaming barricades were seen outside city-halls in Petit-Goâve and throughout the country. Demonstrators closed down the southern entrance to the city of Saint-Marc January 19 demanding the city council give up their posts.

On January 12, gunmen attacked a government vehicle, killing the driver Jean Franklin Versailles and wounding Marie-Claude Préal-Calvin, the sister and private secretary of Préal. This attack is widely interpreted as a response to the president's actions against the legislature. Préal-Calvin was flown to Havana a few days later to receive further medical care.

The *Miami Herald* used the attack as a pretext to call for U.S. intervention. A January 14 editorial stated, "The attack ... is the most visible sign of Haiti's slow slide into the netherworld of political chaos. It should be a signal to the impeachment-preoccupied U.S. government and its United Nations allies that more forceful, direct steps are needed if Haiti is to regain its tenuous grasp on democratic governance."

The U.S. State Department is calling for quick elections for a new parliament.

Prior to Préal's action, the chairmen of the U.S. House of Representatives committees on Intelligence and International Relations sent a letter to U.S. president Clinton saying, "We understand that Haiti's president, René Préal, is considering dissolving parliament and ruling by decree. We should vigorously oppose U.S. government funding of the Haitian government at any level or for any activity."

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere with 80 percent of the workforce unemployed or underemployed and a \$225 annual per capita income.

With the new prime minister in place, Préal is planning to go ahead faster now with the sell-off of the nine state-owned enterprises of Haiti. Privatization has been hampered by

the lack of functioning of the government. Working people in Haiti oppose Préal's privatization program and the layoffs that come with it. Préal is also widely distrusted among Haitians, in particular for his callous remarks when a ferry sunk in September of 1997, killing some 300 people.

As the economic and social crisis continues to deepen Préal has tried to distance himself from imperialism's demand for austerity measures and debt repayment.

In recent months, relations between Haiti and Cuba have been strengthened. The Cuban government sent hundreds of doctors to Haiti following the devastation and deaths caused by Hurricane Georges. At least three volunteer teams of Cuban medical workers and doctors are working with their Haitian counterparts in the capital as well as in the countryside. Préal also visited Cuba in December with a 60 person delegation. In a speech January 1 celebrating the 195th anniversary of Haiti's independence, he called for cancelling the country's foreign debt.

Eric Simpson is a member of Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. Rollande Girard is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

Wave of strikes unfolds across Ecuador

BY JUAN VILLAGÓMEZ

LOS ANGELES — Workers, peasants, and students across Ecuador have staged several strikes since the beginning of the year in response to government austerity measures and plans to sell off the telephone and electric companies to private investors. There are also plans to privatize social security, which will affect millions of people, especially workers that depend on it for health care.

Immediately after his election last August, Ecuadorian president Jamil Mahuad, a Harvard graduate, devalued the national currency, the sucre, by 15 percent. He also slashed social programs, cut subsidies on essential goods, and raised taxes ranging from car sales to using ATM bank machines. Fuel and electricity prices shot up 400 percent.

Seeking to justify the austerity moves, Mahuad described Ecuador's economic crisis as a ship that struck an iceberg. The country's economy grew only 0.8 percent in 1998 and the inflation rate reached 43.4 percent, the highest in Latin America. The bank-

ing system almost collapsed, forcing the government to take over six banks in January, including Filanbanco, one of the largest Ecuadorian banks.

Since the beginning of the year, thousands of high school students, university students, workers, and peasants have joined in street protests. The peasantry is composed mostly of Quechua-speaking peoples in the highland and Amazonian regions. The students are demanding that the government roll back the austerity measures, devote 30 percent of the national budget to education, and release more than 100 people who have been jailed for participating in the protests.

The government announced January 27 it is suspending classes throughout the country and will use the police to repress any demonstrations or acts that "disturb public order." The police have used tear gas and shot at demonstrators, and in two instances invaded the campuses of the Central University in Quito, the capital city, and the Chimborazo National University in the

city of Riobamba.

The newspaper *El Universo* reports that Education Minister Vladimiro Alvarez said he will fire any teacher who participates in the protests. "If there are 500, 500 will have to go and if they are 20,000, they will go to," Alvarez declared.

Hundreds of peasants and students have blocked the Pan-American Highway at different points throughout the country. The protests have spread across the country, including the three main cities of Quito, Guayaquil, and Cuenca.

There is a call for a national strike for February 5. Tens of thousands of working people and youth are expected to take part of the protests, including oil workers from the state-run company Petroecuador, teachers from the National Teachers Union (UNE), university students organized by the Federation of University Students (FEUE); high school students from the Federation of Secondary Students of Ecuador (FESE), and many other groups.

Strikers at Titan join Iowa farmers protest

BY RAY PARSONS

DES MOINES, Iowa — Striking members of United Steelworkers of America Local 164 joined a rally at the Iowa State Capitol here January 12 that drew attention to the crisis facing hog farmers. The workers have been on strike against Titan Tire since May 1998.

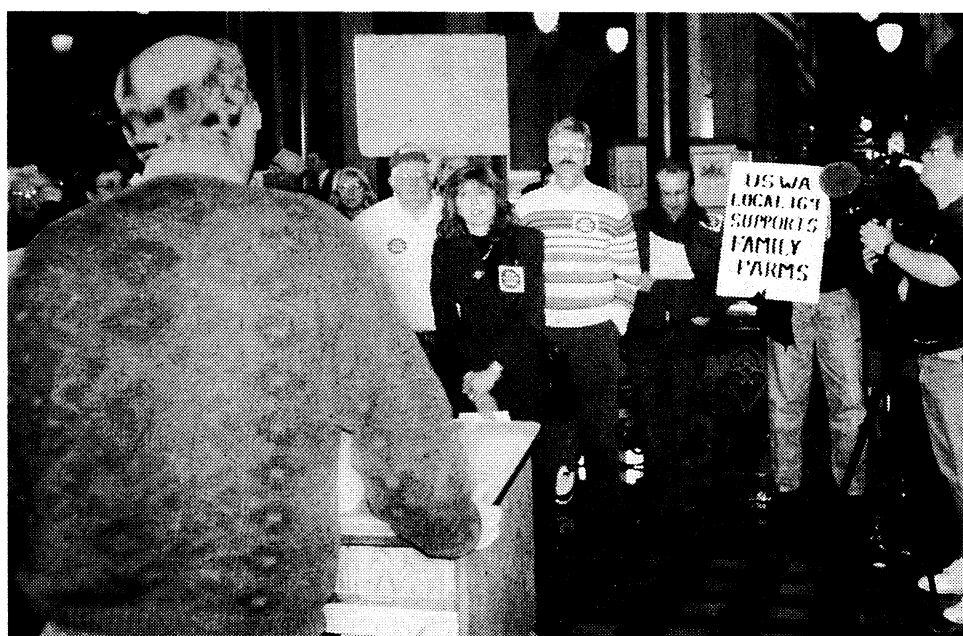
"A lot of people blame unions for the farmer's problems, but it's not us. We need to get together," declared Larry Culver, one of the dozen strikers who came. Over the summer, Culver took part in a number of union hand-billing teams at farm trade shows where Titan was showcasing its products. The strikers talked to farmers and others about their fight.

For the strikers, participating in the January 12 farm protest was a way to return the solidarity they have received from farmers. On December 23 the Iowa Farmers Union and other groups donated 10 hogs, amounting to some 1,400 pounds of fresh pork, to

Local 164's food bank. Larry Ginter, a hog farmer and leader of the January 12 action said, "I'm delighted the strikers came down here. They're in a big fight."

The close ties between workers and working farmers was brought home two days later at a rally outside Titan's headquarters in Quincy, Iowa. Strikers from Des Moines and from another Titan Tire plant in Natchez, Mississippi, as well as dozens of supporters came. Willie Evans, one of the strikers from U.S. Local 303L in Natchez, is also a farmer. He grows soybeans and wheat on a farm of less than 100 acres. Evans led the chanting and singing at the January 14 action and he summed up his enthusiasm for the strike by saying, "I refuse to give the rest of my life to a multimillionaire who cares nothing about his employees!"

He added, "Farmers are faced with the same situation. For example, some government programs have qualifications you may



Militant/Ray Parsons

Titan Tire strikers join in farmers rally in Des Moines capitol January 12

not have. It's unfair." Evans, who is Black, has been following the fight being waged through the class-action lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) demanding an end to decades of discrimina-

tion against Black farmers.

Ray Parsons is a member of USWA Local 310 in Des Moines. Tim Mailhot contributed to this article.

Farmers fighting for land link up in N. Carolina

Continued from front page

pie. There will be no coming back. This is the next civil rights movement. We have to understand the importance of the land."

"The settlement was a closed-door deal that left our plaintiffs out," Eddie Wise, a hog farmer who also raises tilapia fish in Whitakers, North Carolina, told the press. "On March 2 every person here has a right to speak before the judge."

"Why should we have to document discrimination to get a settlement?" Dr. Warthell Iles asked. She is a retired nursing professor and farmer from Edgecomb, North Carolina. "We knew they were discriminating against us and we did not always bother to file complaints. It did no good."

Andre Richardson from Wendell, North Carolina, has been farming for 30 years. The \$50,000 payment offered in the consent decree "won't buy a tractor," he said.

Griffin Todd, Sr. from Zebulon, North Carolina, related, "We've paid over \$100,000 interest for a \$20,000 loan from the government. The \$50,000 offered in the settlement only pays a portion of that."

Stephon Bowens, a lawyer with the Land Loss Prevention Project in Durham, pointed to the limitations on the debt relief farmers could receive. "The loan forgiveness offered in the consent decree is only for specific

loans where the farmers can show discrimination for that incident, not complete loan forgiveness. The USDA does not admit discrimination in this consent decree. There is no relief for all of you when you go back to the USDA," he said.

"This is a human rights issue," Marcus Bernard, a student in Greensboro, said. Bernard is the youth coordinator for the BFAA in North Carolina and had organized a news conference in Greensboro January 13 to support BFAA where a number of students spoke, including children and grandchildren of some of the farmers at the meeting.

Gov't pushes to end farmers' fight

The Agriculture Department and other government agencies and officials are pushing the consent decree as a way of ending the farmers' fight. Numerous articles in the news media have tried to portray the issue as settled. As part of this campaign, the Agriculture Department organized a meeting January 27 they called "National Black Organization Leaders" at the USDA Whitten Building in Washington. The purpose was to get the organization representatives present to promote the consent decree.

Some asked how they could help get farm-

ers to sign up for the settlement. But others posed critical questions to USDA associate general counsel for civil rights David Harris and his boss, Rosalind Gray, the director of the USDA office of civil rights.

Henry Ponder, CEO and president of the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, said, "this must be a joke. You mean a farmer should get an affidavit from one of the other people working in the USDA office to back up a discrimination complaint. Everyone in those offices is responsible for the discrimination — they're not going to speak against each other."

Mark Harrison of the United Methodist Church Board of Church and Society commented, "All the money farmers receive in this settlement could be taken by other creditors. Will the USDA do anything about that?" Harris responded that in the past the USDA had paid off private creditors in certain special cases, but they would not do that for any farmers in this case.

One of the attorneys for the farmers who is promoting the consent decree is J. L. Chestnut, from Selma, Alabama. In a column in the Alabama *Greene County Democrat* January 13, Chestnut wrote, "The lawsuit does not solve all the farmer's problems and

does not make him whole.... It is, however, a beginning and a very important beginning and it was not in the farmer's interest to continue this fight for years into the future simply as a matter of principle."

Gary Grant responded, "The lawsuit should make us whole. It should solve most of the problems we are confronted with. For our lawyers to settle for a minute piece of justice and call it *justice*, continues the type of betrayal Black farmers have endured through the decades. We must restore the farmer, our families, the Black farm industry and our communities. The government has the capability and the resources to do this."

"Everyone is allowed to speak for the farmer except the farmer. Hear what the farmer has to say." The January 30 BFAA meeting in Durham made plans to build both the First National BFAA Meeting to be held in the Raleigh/Durham, North Carolina, area on February 20 and to get farmers and their supporters to Washington March 2 for the Fairness Hearing. Both will be important opportunities for farmers themselves to speak out.

Sam Manuel and Stu Singer are members of the United Transportation Union in Washington, D.C.

Blast at Ford plant kills one, injures dozens

BY JOHN SARGE

DEARBORN, Michigan — A massive explosion rocked the powerhouse at the Ford Motor Co. River Rouge complex here February 1. The blast sent a fireball a quarter of a mile into the air. Fires burned for hours, limiting the ability of rescue crews to confirm that all workers were out of the coal-fired electrical generating station.

There were about 4,000 people working at the six factories and steel mill that make up the 1,100 acre complex at the time of the explosion. One worker in the power plant, Donald Harper, a 58-year-old pipefitter with 35 years at Ford, was killed. At least 14 others were still listed in critical condition 36 hours later.

Many workers' first response as they recover from the shock is to pitch in and try to help the survivors through a blood drive launched by United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 600, which organizes the 10,000 workers at River Rouge. Some workers have begun to ask questions about what caused the catastrophe. A skilled tradesman, who asked that his name not be used, pointed out that Ford has been on a massive cost-cutting program and it seemed to him that "all kinds of corners are being cut."

John Sarge is a member of UAW Local 900 at Ford's Michigan Truck Plant.

Additional contributions come in for Capital Fund

BY HILDA CUZCO

In the last week, four supporters of the Pathfinder Capital Fund contributed \$28,000, including one donation of \$25,000 and three of \$1,000. This comes on top of the successful raising of the \$350,000 needed to purchase the new Agfa Galileo computer-to-plate (CTP) system that is now in operation in Pathfinder's printshop. This equipment is essential to maintaining the shop, by making it possible to sharply reduce the costs of producing Pathfinder books.

The most recent \$28,000 in contributions is a solid first step in raising the additional \$200,000 toward the Capital Fund goal of \$550,000. The use of this \$200,000 for capital needs must be deferred for now. But it is essential to meet operating expenses, covering a serious conjunctural cash shortfall, while the shop operators work to reverse a drop in sales and cut costs by increasing productivity and reducing scrap on Pathfinder and other work — and then regenerating the capital. To date \$237,000 has been collected on the total pledged. Payment of the outstanding pledges is needed to make the final payment on the Galileo due February 15.

Having the CTP system up and running for the last two months has already made it possible to reduce the costs of producing books and to release more of the socialist workers who staff the printshop to concentrate on political work in Socialist Workers Party branches and trade union fractions. The first new book that will be produced entirely with the

new technology will be *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, to be delivered at the end of February. The first chapter of this new book, appears elsewhere in this issue.

The new issue no. 3 of *Ny International*, featuring "U.S. Imperialism has Lost the Cold War" by Jack Barnes, will also be printed in the coming months using the computer-to-plate system. The text of the previous issues of the Swedish-language edition of the Marxist magazine *New International* was printed in Sweden on a small press that a socialist worker there maintained, and then painstakingly collated and bound by the same volunteers who had translated and proofread it. One reason this was done in Sweden, instead of Pathfinder's printshop, was the need for final checks of pages in Swedish. CTP technology allows print-ready files prepared in Sweden, with the editors in full control, to be sent to New York for printing, freeing up many days of valuable time for members and supporters of the Communist League and Young Socialists.

All aspects of book production are aided and costs lowered using the new production methods. Workers in the bindery, where the books are folded, collated, bound, and cut, are beginning to accomplish gains from this. "The images that are imposed digitally are more exact on the sheet of text that is printed on both sides," said Peter Thierjung, who heads up the bindery department. "Plates that are generated in the CTP are more exact," which cuts the setup time and scrap on the press. The printing quality and alignment of the pages is also more uniform from one signature to the next. "When books

are collated, any variation in the pages is barely noticeable, and this makes for much better looking books," he added.

The advantages in utilizing the computer-to-plate equipment can be registered in the output of the bindery machines. "The folding machine is easier to set up with very little adjustment from signature to signature" to account for the variation introduced by the previous hand-stripping method of production, explained Thierjung. This in turn improves binding and trimming the books in the three-knife machine.

Bindery operators are building on this to take on another challenge: to improve the rate of production while maintaining high quality. "We are on a rate campaign," reports Thierjung, "We want to turn out more work with high quality."

Thierjung gave an example of what such campaign can accomplish. "We received an order to ship 250 copies of *By Any Means Necessary* by Malcolm X for a class adoption to universities in Iowa, upstate New York, and elsewhere. They were all printed but needed finishing. We started at 11:00 a.m. and by 6:00 p.m. the same day Federal Express was picking them up for their destination. We were able to turn around books faster than before — we did the folding, collating, binding, trimming, and packing, all in one afternoon. The computer-to-plate technique gives us the ability to respond faster to demands for Pathfinder books."

To find out how to make a contribution, write to the Capital Fund Committee, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Farmers lead a fight to keep their land

Interview with Carl Parker, a farmer fighting against government foreclosures

BY JAMES HARRIS

ASHBURN, Georgia — Working farmers are facing their worst crisis in decades, as real incomes plummet and they are caught in the squeeze of falling commodity prices and monopoly costs of seed, fertilizer, pesticides, and farm machinery. Many are deeply mired in impossible debt. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) predicts 38,000 farms a year will go under through 2002.

Farmers who are Black are now losing farm land at a rate that is two and a half times that of other U.S. farmers. They face the same conditions as all other working farmers, plus the added onus of racist discrimination. Over a 15-year period from 1978 to 1992, farmers who are Black lost 55 percent of their land — down from 57,000 farms and 4.2 million acres of land in 1978 to 18,816 farms and 2.3 million acres in 1992.

Carl Parker is a 41-year-old farmer who lives in this southern Georgia town. He is part of a class-action lawsuit filed against the USDA in 1996, demanding redress for years of discrimination against farmers who are Black in providing low-interest loans and crop assistance from government agencies. Parker opposes the proposed settlement that lawyers for the USDA and the farmers are pushing, which would give most plaintiffs just \$50,000 and relief from those debts to the USDA that they can prove are a result of discrimination. He plans to participate in the March 2 rally in Washington, D.C., opposing the agreement.

USDA foreclosures continue

Despite the temporary moratorium on foreclosures against farmers who are plaintiffs in the suit, USDA officials in some local areas are moving to carry out business as usual, hoping farmers are unaware of their rights.

Parker has been informed that the USDA is carrying out procedures to foreclose on land he and his brother, Gary Parker, own. Georgia USDA officials are claiming that Parker is not a part of the class-action suit, and have told him they plan to put his land up for auction the first week in February. The USDA recently backed down from this threat.

Carl Parker finds it suspicious that officials claim not to know that he part of the suit, since his status as a plaintiff stopped an attempted foreclosure proceeding against him in July 1998. The way he learned of the planned auction added to his suspicions. A neighbor wanted to rent Parker's farm, and called the USDA office. The county loan officer told the neighbor the land would soon be on sale. The neighbor told Parker he wouldn't be renting, because he would probably be able to buy the land soon at a cheap price. This was later confirmed when Parker called the office and learned they were



Carl Parker, a farmer in Ashburn, Georgia, fighting against squeeze on small producers. The USDA is trying to foreclose on him despite the fact that Parker is part of class-action suit against discrimination by the government.

up to their old tricks.

Far from being the neutral government agency it claims, Parker believes local officials in the USDA office have it in for him because of his fighting example. A USDA official "told one of my neighbors, 'You have to watch those two guys [Carl and Gary Parker]. They are smart. I've been trying and trying and haven't be able to successfully get them yet,'" Parker said. "I took that as a vendetta against us."

"They want my land bad," the farmer continued. "One reason is that we have been appraised at about \$170,000 dollars in standing timber on the land right now, and a lot of young timber growing."

Parker has proof that he is part of the suit and is confident he can beat back this most recent attempt to take his land. But the fact that his land is in dispute means it might as well be foreclosed. He is unable to get the loans necessary to farm. Other farmers won't rent the land while the outcome is pending, either because they want to buy the land or not get caught in the middle.

Other farmers who are involved in the lawsuit report they've gotten calls from banks, feed companies, and equipment suppliers, all of whom are closely eyeing the terms of the settlement and awaiting the decision date, standing in line for their share. For some farmers, this will place any plans they have

to continue farming in jeopardy.

Battle to keep the land

Parker's history is one that many working farmers can identify with. He began farming with his father when he graduated from high school, and has fought to overcome crushing debt since the early 1980s.

"My father died in the early 1980s," said Parker. "One morning he called the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) and asked about his loan application. The supervisor said the loan was denied. I could see something went all over him at that point. That was Monday morning. He went all day and that night he had a massive heart attack and died. At that point he owed Farmers Home, I guess, \$200,000. And he owed the Federal Land Bank about \$300,000. I

guess the pressure from that killed him."

After their father's death Carl and Gary took over the farm and began the long fight to save their 207 acres apiece and continue farming. They grew cotton, soybeans, peanuts, corn, and wheat, as well as raising livestock.

"The FmHA made us a loan," said Parker, "and they made us put up everything we had — hogs, farm equipment, and cattle, everything. The first year we were able to pay them off, so the next year we went back and borrowed more money because we didn't make enough to pay them and farm again. That next year there was a drought so we were not able to pay them all that we owed them. So they turned around and told us that we couldn't borrow any more money unless we acquired more land. We got more land — but in my opinion we were just getting deeper in debt. Then there was another drought in 1985."

The family was again unable to pay the debt, but managed to stave off losing the land. The day-to-day functioning of the USDA has been ruthless against the Parkers, as it is with all working farmers in debt. In 1989 when his house burned down, Carl had to sign the check he got from the insurance company over to the USDA rather than use it to rebuild his home. Then, the same office refused to give him a loan to rebuild the house, claiming he was already in too much debt.

The Parkers continued to try to farm until 1990, when their crop insurance company refused to cover their losses. At that time the brothers were farming about 1,000 acres of land, some of it rented. Since 1990 the Parkers have not been able to farm. They are trying to hold onto the land and find a way to resume farming, supporting themselves through off-farm jobs in the meantime.

In December 1997 the USDA started foreclosure proceedings against Gary Parker's half of the farm. They advertised in the newspaper that there would be an auction on the courthouse steps in Columbus, Georgia, Jan. 6, 1998. "We filed a Chapter 11 bankruptcy to stop it. That was the only way we could stop it. We got there two minutes before sale time," Carl Parker chuckled "and that's what stopped it. And we have been fighting it ever since."

'Read carefully before accepting deal'

As Parker sees it, the consent decree aimed at ending the lawsuit is a long way from what farmers need. "Every farmer should carefully read the actual words of the settlement before they decide to support it."

"I owe them [the USDA] about \$550,000 with accumulating interest of \$67.00 a day. My brother owes about the same.... Together we owe around \$1.1 million. If the suit goes through like it is, we will get our debt reduced to about \$400,000. We could still lose the farm," said Parker.

The settlement stipulates that a claimant can only get debt relief from the government for discrimination that he can prove, and this is not easy to do. Parker believes he has enough documented proof of discrimination that goes back to 1990, but is not sure he can prove back to 1984 even though the discrimination was real.

Parker spoke about the difficulty in convincing some farmers that the government's much-publicized offer is not all it's cracked up to be. Some want to believe that they are finally going to see relief from their long struggles. Others who don't intend to farm again think it's best to cut their losses and go for the deal, he said.

"It's hard to convince people. A lot of farmers are just hearing about the \$50,000 and they think all government debts are canceled. One fellow told me that he didn't believe the government would get on TV and put in the paper things that they aren't going to do, because it would open them up to a lawsuit. I told him what does he think we are already in," laughed Parker. But Parker is determined to get out the facts and encourage other farmers to fight for more. "It might hurt me, I might lose mine, but I'm going to fight to help somebody else," he declared.

Parker has an active schedule over the next period. He will be talking to farmers in his area about the realities of the settlement and showing them the actual written proposal. He plans to be in Albany, Georgia, on February 13 at a meeting called to discuss the settlement. He also plans to attend the first national conference of the Black Farmers and Agriculturists Association on February 20 in Tillery, North Carolina, and he plans to be in Washington on March 2.

James Harris is a member of the United Transportation Union. Arlene Rubinstein contributed to this article.

Ontario: 'They drive us to grow more for less'

BY SYLVIE CHARBIN

AND MARIA ISABEL LE BLANC

FOREST, Ontario — The first time *Militant* supporters met Garry Gilliard was at a December 1 rally of 1,000 people, most of them hog farmers, in front of Queen's Park, the Ontario legislature. Farmers went there to demand immediate income assistance from the provincial and federal governments as a result of a worldwide collapse in farm prices over the last year.

On January 23 these reporters spent about four hours at Gilliard's farm, 180 miles west of Toronto. His wife Jackie and his brother John also sat in on part of the discussion. As well as raising 3,000 hogs and 140 sows, Garry, who is 38, and his two brothers plant 1,800 acres of corn, soy beans, and alfalfa, under contract from a seed company. Aside from hiring a couple of part-time workers in the spring and fall, they do all the work.

Garry said the annual operating costs of the farm come to about Can\$1.4 million (Can\$1=US\$0.65), which include about \$100,000 in interest payments. The three brothers net less than \$15,000 per year each after expenses. "Just to break even with the hogs," Gilliard said, "we have to get \$1.20 per kilogram." In 1998 hog prices fell as low as 34 cents per kilogram. "We don't know where we'll be this time next year, or even if we'll still be hog farmers," he added. Showing us a copy of a local real estate magazine with farm listings, Gilliard explained that

many farms in the area are for sale, but that few people are buying. He added more than half the farmers take other jobs to survive, a number that is increasing every day.

Although Garry and his brothers are contracted with Maple Leaf Foods, which guarantees they'll have a place to bring their hogs for processing, the contract doesn't guarantee fair price. Last year meatpackers on strike against Maple Leaf were forced back to work with a 40 percent wage cut. This settlement paved the way for more concessions from other workers in the meatpacking industry, like the 800 workers at Quality Meat, who struck against a similar wage cuts December 7 (see article on page 3). Meanwhile the prices farmers receive for their livestock remains below the break-even level.

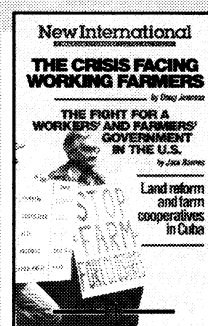
Garry and his brother John were familiar with the Maple Leaf strike, and we spent some time discussing the stakes in the strike against Quality Meat as well as the difficult working conditions that exist in meatpacking plants. They agreed that packing bosses were making a lot of money by putting the squeeze on both the hog farmers and the packinghouse workers.

We asked Garry what he thought should be done to aid hog farmers. "Farmers have to stick together more than they do now," he answered. "There should have been even more of us at Queen's Park in December." He added that Ontario farmers needed an income stabilization fund like the one farm-

ers contribute to in Quebec. This program provides subsidies to farmers when hog prices fall below costs of production, although as a result of this year's crisis, this fund has been virtually depleted.

Sylvie Charbin is a member of Local Lodge 2113 of the International Association of Machinists.

AVAILABLE FROM PATHFINDER



New International no. 4

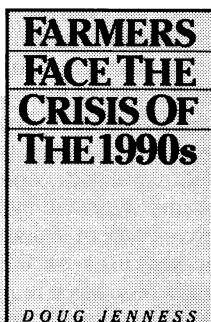
- ❖ The Fight for a Workers and Farmers Government in the United States by Jack Barnes
- ❖ The Crisis Facing Working Farmers by Doug Jenness
- ❖ Land Reform and Farm Cooperatives in Cuba, two speeches by Fidel Castro \$9.00

Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s

DOUG JENNESS

Examines the deepening economic and social crisis in the capitalist world and explains how farmers and workers can unite internationally against the mounting assaults from the billionaire bankers, industrialists, and merchants of grain. \$3.50

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 16 or write Pathfinder.



A visit with locked-out workers in Colorado

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 3284 23rd St., San Francisco, California, 94110. Tel: (415) 824-1429.

E-mail: 105162.605@compuserve.com

BY ARRIN HAWKINS
AND HEATHER WOOD

PUEBLO, Colorado — A team of supporters of the *Militant* recently traveled to Colorado to visit the Steelworkers locked out at CF&I/Oregon Steel. The team included two socialist workers who are members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), one of whom is also a member of the Young Socialists; a young political activist from the Twin Cities who is involved in organizing a speaking tour for Gary Grant, president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, and a supporter of the *Militant* from Denver.

Our purpose was to connect with these workers and learn about the current status of their fight as they enter into another year of battle against the company. One of the first priorities of our team was to show solidarity on the picket line and at the warming huts workers have set up along the plant gates. Workers told us that Oregon Steel had recently filed a complaint with the Depart-

ment of Transportation to have these huts removed for "obstructing traffic." USWA members fought this restriction on their right to picket. The continued presence of their huts serves as evidence of the union members' tenacity and willingness to fight.

Pueblo, Colorado, was traditionally a steel town. At one point the mill employed more than 8,000 workers, and the building remains a prominent feature of the town's landscape. Many workers explained that their fathers and grandfathers had preceded them in the steel mills. For many others, working in the mills had become a family heritage. But CF&I/Oregon Steel had other plans.

After Oregon Steel bought out CF&I, the bosses initiated a severe attack on workers' rights. While talking with locked-out workers in the warming huts, many explained the conditions imposed over the past three years. One Steelworker who had been with the company for more than 30 years, said the fight is as much about being treated with basic human dignity and respect as it is against the forced overtime and attacks against pension plans.

We spent the rest of the day at the USWA union hall. There we meet several Steelworkers who are Latino who explained their fight to desegregate the mill.

When we returned to the Twin Cities, we spoke to about 20 people attending a Militant Labor Forum January 29 to hear a reportback on our trip. The Young Social-

Workers pick up 'Militant' in Illinois



Militant/Jacob Perras

More than 140 workers in central Illinois bought copies of the *Militant* at plant gates and elsewhere January 25-30. Above, a coal miner at Crown 2 Freeman United mine in Virden checks out the paper. Supporters of the *Militant* and the Spanish-language magazine *Perspectiva Mundial* are beginning a month-long campaign February 6 to sell copies and renew subscriptions to the socialist press.

ists is planning a fund-raising film showing of "Struggles in Steel" to raise money to help cover the cost of the journey. The film was chosen because one of the locked-out workers who is Latino explained that the fight of Blacks to desegregate the mills was the same as his own.

Arrin Hawkins is involved in organizing a speaking tour for Gary Grant, president of Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association in Minnesota.

Heather Wood is a member of the Young Socialists and the United Steelworkers of America Local 7263.

Youth meeting in Cyprus discusses world politics

Continued from Page 20

dents, Ethiopian Youth League, General Union of Libyan Students, Socialist Youth and Ittihadiya Youth of Morocco, SWAPO Youth League of Namibia, ANC Youth League of South Africa, and youth of POLISARIO from Western Sahara. Besides the General Union of Palestinian Students, most other groups that sent delegations from the Middle East were affiliated to Communist Parties in Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, and Syria.

In addition to the UJC of Cuba, the Federation of Communists of Argentina; October 8 Revolutionary Youth, Socialist Youth of Brazil, and youth of the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB); Communist Youth of Colombia; Youth of the Popular Socialist Party of Mexico; Youth of the March 26 Movement in Uruguay; and Casa de la Juventud of Paraguay took part from Latin America.

The only participants from North America came from the Young Communist League and Young Socialists in the United States.

Prior to the opening of the meeting at the international conference center in Nicosia, the island's capital, delegates visited the "green line," which has divided Cyprus in two since 1974. That's when the Turkish army invaded the island and occupied the northern third of the country, which Ankara has held under its control ever since. The Turkish government sent in troops that year after a right-wing coup toppled the elected government of Cyprus. The coup was backed by the military regime in Greece in power at that time.

The island's population of about 730,000 was nearly 20 percent Turkish Cypriots. The rest were mostly Greek Cypriots. While the population lived in mixed communities and intermarriage was common, discrimination against the Turkish-speaking minority was widespread for decades. That had been fostered by British imperialism — the country's former colonial master until 1960, which maintains two military bases and 3,000 troops on the island to this day — and aided by the bourgeois regimes that ruled after independence. For the last quarter century the island's population of Greek and Turkish Cypriots has been separated almost completely in the two parts of the country.

Ending the partition of Cyprus was a topic of discussion at the opening ceremony and at forums organized by EDON and the Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL), after sessions of WFDY's assembly. AKEL's bloc has a majority in parliament, while the country's presidency is held by the conservative party. One meeting on the

partition was addressed jointly by a parliamentary deputy of AKEL and the foreign minister of the conservative government.

Debate on arrest of Pinochet, Iraq

In his opening report to the General Assembly, outgoing WFDY president Olivier Meier, a leader of the Movement of Communist Youth of France, condemned the "arrogant policy of domination carried out by the United States" and spoke of the spreading crisis of capitalism in Asia and Latin America, rising unemployment in Europe, and other evils of imperialism. He also said young people can be happy about progress made in parts of the world.

The two examples he gave was the departure from the presidency of Indonesia of Suharto, after popular mobilizations there last year, and the fact that Augusto Pinochet, former dictator of Chile, "cannot claim impunity anymore. The time has come when demands for human rights gain ground the world over, and dictators have to pay for their crimes." Pinochet was arrested by British authorities in London months ago, while undergoing medical treatment there, after a judge in Spain issued an extradition order. Legal proceedings have been initiated against the former Chilean ruler on charges of ordering the murder of Spanish citizens during the military dictatorship he headed from 1973 to 1989.

In the discussion that took place during the first session of the assembly, Anne Howie of the Young Socialists in the UK presented a different view. All anti-imperialist fighters should oppose the arrest of Pinochet by London and the demand for extradition by the Spanish authorities, Howie said. "British justice is no justice. London's stance in this case is nothing but a cover to advance the so-called ethical foreign policy of British imperialism. This includes participating in the U.S. bombings of Iraq, maintaining military bases and troops in Cyprus, and participation in the NATO invasion of Yugoslavia." Howie pointed to how London has used extradition to deal blows to the Irish struggle to end British occupation of the six counties. The arrest of Pinochet by British authorities is a breach of Chilean sovereignty, she stated. "Only the Chilean people can deal with the crimes of Pinochet's regime and bring him to justice."

Howie's remarks sparked a lot of informal debate, which carried over to regional meetings of WFDY affiliates in Latin America and the Caribbean. In one such meeting, Daniel Torre of the Federation of Communist Youth of Argentina said that WFDY should back the actions by the Span-

ish and British governments against Pinochet. "We should support anyone who tries to bring the bloody dictator to justice."

Delegates of the UJC of Cuba and the Youth of March 26 Movement of Uruguay countered that view. "When could revolutionaries depend on the Spanish and British states to bring a dictator to justice?" asked Rodriguez of the UJC of Cuba. "We should demand that not only Pinochet and his henchmen be brought to justice but that all the imperialist powers that propped up his regime be held accountable, especially those responsible in Washington."

The resolution on Latin America adopted by the regional meeting and the assembly said that while dictatorial regimes should never enjoy impunity, the arrest of Pinochet in London is a violation of Chilean sovereignty and shows the hypocrisy of British imperialism.

In her initial remarks, Howie she pointed to the importance of organizing actions against the recent U.S.-British bombings of Iraq. While the assembly was taking place, U.S. planes bombed a site in northern Iraq at least once.

A representative of the Iraqi Democratic Youth Federation (IDYF) mentioned in passing opposition to the imperialist attacks on Iraq and to the United Nations embargo. He stressed, however, that "our people are suffering day by day because of the treatment and behavior of Iraq's dictator, Saddam Hussein." His group circulated a petition at the meeting condemning "human rights violations of the Hussein regime."

A few delegates joined this issue at plenary sessions and during informal discussions. Ryan Kelly, representing the Young Socialists in the United States, said that condemning the Iraqi regime and the U.S.-British bombings and UN sanctions against Iraq as equivalent in some way plays into the hands of imperialism. Washington, he pointed out, is the organizing center of assaults against the people of Iraq. U.S. imperialism not only wants to teach Iraqi people a lesson. Their actions are part of tightening the imperialist encirclement of the former Soviet Union, as does NATO expansion into Eastern and Central Europe, and the NATO occupation of Yugoslavia.

Few delegates described actions in their countries against the recent U.S.-British assaults on Iraq. The IDYF view was shared by a majority of people at the meeting. The resolution on international solidarity adopted by the assembly stated: "We feel that the [UN] blockade should be lifted... We also condemn in the strongest possible way the Iraqi government for the gross vio-

lation of peoples basic human rights causing immense misery to the Iraqi people. We demand stoppage of all military actions against Iraq and immediate withdrawal of all military troops from the area."

Korea's struggle for unification

General political discussion also took place under the point on evaluating WFDY's work since the federation's last General Assembly in Portugal in 1995. Harchand Singh, WFDY's general secretary and a leader of the All India Youth Federation, presented that report. He said that at the Lisbon meeting many delegates had questioned whether WFDY would survive the collapse of the regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Most of its member organizations had been youth groups affiliated to Communist Parties that looked to Moscow for political guidance.

"Since that time WFDY has been strengthened and stabilized," Harchand stated, through a number of activities, including a solidarity caravan in Western Sahara in 1996 and work through UN institutions. He said that the 14th world youth festival in Cuba was the main event that helped accomplish this goal, giving new life and continuity to the "festival movement."

Lisette Diaz Castro of the UJC of Cuba said that repeated references to the 1997 gathering in Cuba and work by many WFDY affiliates to counter Washington's economic war on the Cuban people showed the attraction of young people around the world to the example of a people that refuse to bend their knee to imperialism. "We still face many challenges to build an anti-imperialist youth movement around the world," she stated. But the objective conditions of the deepening crisis of world capitalism — from Indonesia to Brazil — and signs of resistance by students, other youth, and working people bode well for that.

One of the activities of WFDY that elicited some debate was a fact-finding mission to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that the federation sponsored last July.

Hirochi Yonezawa of the Democratic Youth League of Japan, which is affiliated to the Communist Party of that country, lodged a formal objection that the written report evaluating WFDY's work in the last four years included a quite favorable description of that trip. Japan's CP, which increased its share of the votes in recent parliamentary elections, has joined the coalition government in Japan with bourgeois parties. More than a dozen WFDY affiliates took part in the trip to the DPRK, including

Continued on Page 17

A sea change in working-class politics

Linking up with the past, present, and future of
groups of vanguard workers and farmers in struggle

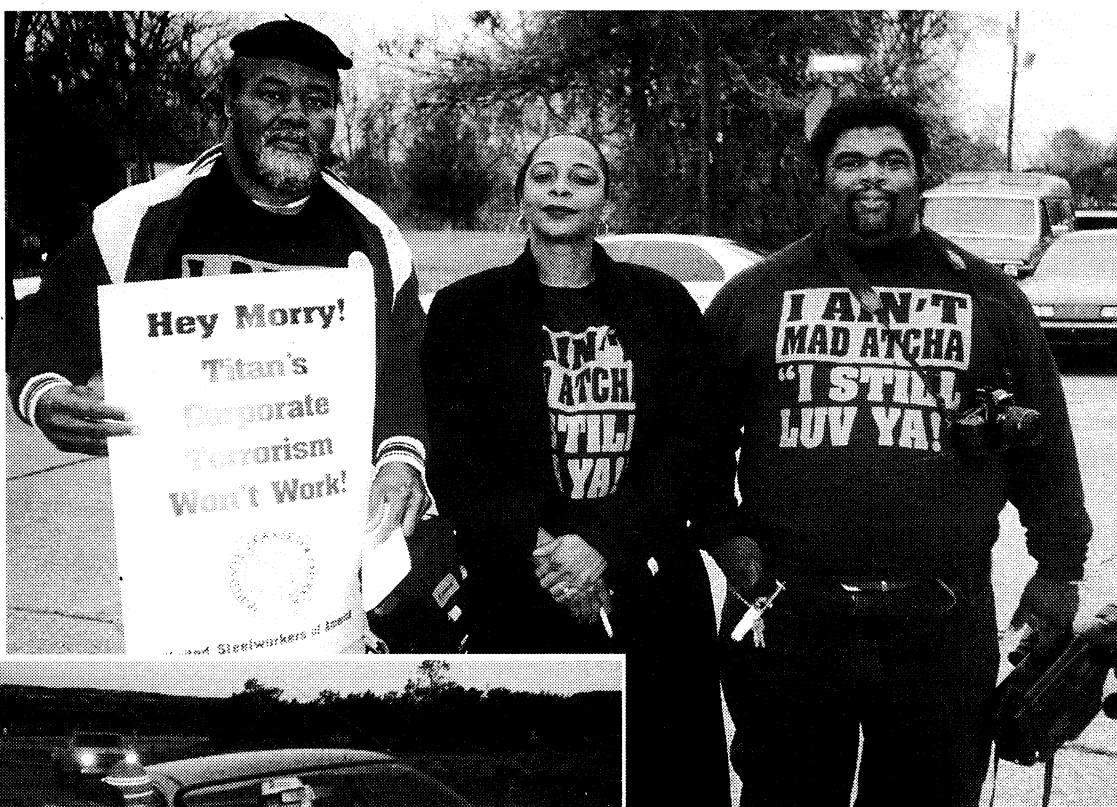
The following talk by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, was given December 6, 1998, in Los Angeles, California, at the closing session of a conference jointly sponsored by the Young Socialists and the SWP. This conference of some 350 participants coincided with the Third National Convention of the Young Socialists, held December 4-6, in which nearly 100 young people twenty-six years old and younger took part.

One of the highlights of the weekend activities that Barnes refers several times in these summary remarks was a panel and discussion, held the previous evening, called "Bringing Alive 'The Changing Face of U.S. Politics.'" The panel featured six Young Socialists leaders engaged in a wide range of revolutionary work, from high schools and college campuses to factories, farms, and the printshop producing Pathfinder books and pamphlets, the Militant newspaper, and other revolutionary materials. They were joined on the panel and in the discussion by a number of leaders of strikes, lockout conflicts, and farm struggles around the country who talked about the stakes in the battles they were in the midst of, and about the importance of the Young Socialists gathering. These included Gary Grant and Eddie Slaughter, president and vice president, respectively, of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association; David Yard, a member of United Mine Workers of America Local 1669, on strike at that time against Freeman United Coal in Illinois; and Dean Cook, a member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 4-227, in Pasadena, Texas, fighting a three-year lockout battle against Crown Central Petroleum.

The talk is the opening chapter of a new book to be published by Pathfinder at the end of February, *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by Jack Barnes. The talk is copyright © Pathfinder Press 1999 and is reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

We have just heard the report by Samantha Kern on behalf of the newly elected National Committee of the



Militant/Laura Anderson

Above, catfish workers who are fighting for decent treatment at Freshwater Farms in Belzoni, Mississippi, join January 23 support rally for striking Steelworkers at Titan Tire in Natchez, Mississippi. At left, Young Socialists member Manuel González sells the *Militant* to miners in Kayenta, Arizona. Shift in mass psychology in the working class today imposes obligations on socialist workers and youth to join with vanguard workers and farmers in struggle.

Militant/Susan LaMont

Young Socialists, outlining the decisions of their convention that concluded less than an hour ago. Samantha introduced us to the members of the YS National Committee seated here on the platform.

The committee of the Socialist Workers Party that will work the most closely with this new National Committee of the Young Socialists in the coming months is the Trade Union Committee. This is a field-based leadership committee; its members work and live in cities across the United States. For the first time since the mid-1980s, moreover, the development of the trade union work of the party has reached the point where the composition of the Trade Union Committee has been able to coincide substantially with the election and reelection of the organizers of the steering committees of every one of our national industrial trade union fractions.

So, let me introduce to you the members of the Trade Union Committee who are also seated here on the platform, and tell you who they are, what they are doing, and where they are going.

First, is Tom Alter, from Des Moines, member of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. Tom is on his way into the printshop. Nan Bailey, from Seattle, in the International Association of Machinists. Both Nan and Tom are organizers of the steering committees of their respective national fractions. Joel Britton, from Chicago, is the organizer of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union national fraction steering com-

mittee. Doug Jenness from the Twin Cities, who's a member of the United Steelworkers. Samantha Kern, from San Francisco, member of the UFCW and YS National Committee. Tom Leonard, a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers fraction in Houston. Sam Manuel from Washington, D.C., organizer of the steering committee of the United Transportation Union fraction. Greg McCartan from Boston, organizer of the national fraction steering committee of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). Cecelia Moriarty, the organizer of the Coal Committee of the party, had to leave an hour and half ago to get back to Pittsburgh for work. Norton Sandler, San Francisco, member of the International Association of Machinists. Amy Euston, from Des Moines, who is currently organizer of the United Auto Workers fraction steering committee but has a start date in a UFCW-organized plant. She is also a member of the Young Socialists. And Gregory Weston from the Twin Cities, organizer of the U.S. national fraction steering committee.

Sam Manuel, Doug Jenness, and Tom Alter also compose the Farm Committee of the party, which has largely grown out of the work of the Trade Union Committee.

This trade union work leadership body, which includes the organizers of the steering committees of each of our national fractions, is starting to lead what we have called

the third campaign for the turn.¹ These are the comrades who will work most closely with the Young Socialists National Committee on the road to the April 1-4, 1999, convention of the Socialist Workers Party and conference of our broader movement, to be held in San Francisco.

¹ Following a July 1998 Active Workers Conference held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party launched a campaign to increase the number of party members working in meatpacking jobs organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) and garment and textile jobs organized by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), as well as to rebuild a national union fraction of coal miners organized in the United Mine Workers (UMWA). This is known in the SWP as the "third campaign for the turn" to the industrial unions. Altogether, the party has national fractions of its members in seven industrial unions today. Together with the two listed above, these are the International Association of Machinists (IAM); Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy union (PACE—formerly the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, prior to a 1999 merger with the paperworkers union); United Auto Workers (UAW); United Steelworkers (USWA); and the United Transportation Union (UTU).

The party's turn to industry, initiated in 1978, aimed at getting the overwhelming majority of the membership and leadership of the party into industry and the industrial unions to carry out political and trade union work. This is the norm for communist organizations. But the political retreat of the working class and labor movement in the United States during most of the 1950s and 1960s had made it impossible for the SWP to maintain the organized structure of industrial union fractions it had built since the 1930s.

The second campaign for the turn, begun in 1985, focused on expanding the number of union fractions in each party branch, and thereby extending the geographic spread of the party's national industrial union fractions. The first and second campaigns for the turn are documented in the book, *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* by Jack Barnes, as well as the booklet *Background to "The Changing Face of U.S. Politics."* Both are published and distributed by Pathfinder.

Available from Pathfinder March 1999

Capitalism's World Disorder Working-Class Politics at the Millennium

- ❖ New Openings for Mass Work and the Struggle for a Proletarian Party
- ❖ Capitalist Deflation and Debt Slavery
- ❖ Stalinism versus Communism
- ❖ Buchananism: What It Is and How to Fight It
- ❖ Washington Lets Yugoslavia Bleed
- ❖ The 'Bell Curve': the Scandal of Class Privilege
- ❖ Socialism and Lifetime Education
- ❖ Cuba's Socialist Revolution
- ❖ Youth and the Communist Movement

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 16, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150.

Above all, their job on the way to San Francisco will be to recruit to the party every member of the Young Socialists who is not in the SWP. Together they will organize their members to set the example on bringing fellow workers with them to the convention.

Many people in this room were in Pittsburgh for an Active Workers Conference hosted by the SWP and Young Socialists in July of this year. At that conference, we referred to *asea change* in politics that was occurring. We said we would probably never use that term again, so it wouldn't become a special term of art employed by the party and no one else. But I've just used it again, because I've been seeking a word to capture what has been described here the last three days and have found nothing better. If we listen to ourselves, listen to each other, think about what has come together here at this conference and the obligations it imposes on us, we will recognize that sea change, or at least the most important aspect of it: that a shift in mass psychology is taking place in the working class in the United States of America.

The same is probably happening in other imperialist countries. I know comrades in our movement internationally think this is true. But in this summary I'll stick to our experience here.²

Earlier in the conference, we talked about many aspects of the working-class retreat that—to our surprise, at the time—we faced in the early years of this decade.³ This



A sea change in working-class politics had begun at least by early 1997. "It became clear that no matter what the legacy—in an industry, in a union, in a region, among any segment of working people—no matter what the results of previous struggles, what happens now has less and less connection to earlier defeats." Above, Teamsters at UPS rally in Ontario, California, during victorious 10-day strike in July 1997.

was not what we had expected would happen, as the opening article in *New International* no. 11, "Ours is the Epoch of World Revolution," explains. We thought the union battles at Eastern Airlines and Pittston Coal in 1989–90 were more the coming pattern. But that is not the way it turned out. We faced a pause and then a renewed retreat. Battered by the way imperialism's brutal assault on Iraq ended, without a fight, and lulled by the extension of the Reagan-Bush economic expansion, our class went into retreat for more than half a decade.

In a period of retreat like that, defeats weigh more heavily. Most workers' minds adjust—if only slightly—toward the increased probability of defeat. Each posi-

sitive union-building activity in the strike against A.T. Massey Coal, and who are now sitting in the federal pen, serving long terms. Not only framed up by the government, but thrown to the dogs by the officialdom.⁴ It made me think about the history of our party, of Kelly Postal, as well as the 1939 Sioux City frame-up of Teamster militants that Farrell Dobbs describes in *Teamster Politics* and *Teamster Bureaucracy*. Of the SWP Smith Act defendants who went to the federal pen in 1941 for their opposition to U.S. imperialism's war policies.⁵ You didn't know who was moving faster to get them there—the Teamster officialdom and their like-minded brethren, or the state.

David walked us through those not-so-long-ago battles by brothers and sisters in the mines who fought in a different period and couldn't find a way to win. He reminded us of what we owe to the blood that has been shed.

He talked about many other things as well, and after he sat down something interesting occurred. We began discussing how we were not going to allow a simple line of continuity to be drawn to that earlier defeat. The outcome of the Freeman strike—and the



Militant photos by Megan Arney
Above, Gary Grant, president of Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, speaks as part of panel titled "Bringing Alive 'The Changing Face of U.S. Politics.'" Right, Samantha Kern introduces newly elected Young Socialists National Committee. From left, standing, are Paul Pederson, Alaric Dirmeyer, Ryan Kelly, Heather Wood, and, partially hidden, Maithong Yang. "The working class today is more radical from a class standpoint than the student population. But changes are also taking place there too—change that depends above all on the linkage to struggles of working people."

² Participating in the conference were members and leadership delegations from communist organizations in Australia, Canada, France, Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, including Young Socialists from these countries who were fraternal delegates at the YS convention. In addition, there were participants from several other countries.

³ On Saturday, December 5, Barnes had spoken to the party/youth conference on "Bonapartism and Polarization: Contradictions and Instability of the Leftward Shift in Bourgeois Politics." Earlier that same day, Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the Marxist magazine *New International*, had spoken on "Cuba as Part of the World: Confronting Global Capitalism's Assault on the Toilers and Winning a New Generation to Communism." Waters, who had recently returned from a reporting trip to Cuba for the *Militant* newspaper, brought greetings to the Young Socialists convention from the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution, an organization founded in 1993 that brings together fighters from several generations who participated in the revolutionary war against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship, battles to defend the revolution from imperialist-organized aggression, and internationalist missions in Africa, Latin America, Vietnam, the Middle East, and elsewhere.



tive development is read as incidental—important, but incidental, not symptomatic of something beginning to change. Each struggle is seen as an effort, sometimes even a glorious effort, but not necessarily a break from a pattern of retreat. Positive news for the enemy class is anticipated as the most likely outcome; negative news for our class is foreseen as the unfortunate but anticipated fact.

Struggles themselves are surrounded by a certain attitude—not an attitude of "can't win," but more a tendency to become somewhat isolated from each other, and to accept such isolation. You face the "fact" that after the struggle you are involved in winds down—and over that eight-year period, struggles did wind down—it may be a long time before you're involved in another one.

Organized communists don't see it quite the same way because of the breadth, scope, and variety of activity and practical work they're engaged in. But we, too, are affected by this. Above all, we're part of our class, of its fighting vanguard, and we share all these experiences and their effects.

Rise in resistance since early 1997

The sea change I've spoken of had begun by the open-

ing of last year—early 1997, at the latest. That's when it became clear that no matter what the legacy—in an industry, in a union, in a region, among any segment of working people—no matter how limited the results of previous struggles, what happens now in any struggle has less and less connection to earlier defeats. Using your peripheral vision to find the fighters in the working class and among its allies becomes more and more valuable. They are often there. It's like becoming a good point guard. Develop your peripheral vision. Teammates are there!

Farmers involved in struggles an ocean apart will reach out to each other like brothers and sisters. Militant farmers who have been part of this conference will travel to England to meet farmers who will have never in their lives met anyone from North Carolina or Georgia. Farmers in England are now going into the worst agricultural crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. These vanguard fighters will have a new and unanticipated identification with each other.

I was grateful to David Yard for reminding us when he spoke on the panel last evening of Donnie Thornsby and the three other UMWA brothers who were framed-up in 1987 for their intransigent union-building activity in the strike against A.T.

⁴ Donnie Thornsby, president of United Mine Workers Local 2496 in Kentucky, and three other UMWA miners were convicted in December 1987 on frame-up charges of killing a scab coal hauler during the 1984–85 strike against the A.T. Massey Coal company. He and the other three miners—Arnold Heightland, James Darryl Smith, and David Thornsby—are serving sentences ranging from thirty-five to forty-five years at the federal prison in Ashland, Kentucky.

⁵ From 1934 through the opening years of the 1940s, the class-struggle leadership of Teamsters Local 574 (later Local 544) in Minneapolis led the battles that built an industrial union movement in that city, organized over-the-road truck drivers throughout the Midwest, and transformed the Teamsters union in that area into a fighting social movement. In June 1941 a mass membership meeting of Local 544 voted to disaffiliate from the Teamsters and join the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). In April 1942 Kelly Postal, secretary-treasurer of the local, was tried and convicted for "embezzlement" for carrying out the membership decision to transfer union funds to a new bank account for the CIO affiliate; he was sentenced to one to five years in prison and was paroled in May 1944 after serving eleven months.

In October 1939 seven leaders of Teamster Local 383 in Sioux City, Iowa, Local 90 in Des Moines, Iowa, and Local 554 in Omaha, Nebraska, were convicted and sentenced to two years in prison on frame-up charges of having burned a truck during a hard-fought and victorious bakery truck drivers strike in Sioux City earlier that year.

On December 8, 1941, eighteen leaders of Local 544-CIO and of the Socialist Workers Party, convicted in federal court of "conspiring to advocate the overthrow of the U.S. government," were given sentences ranging from twelve to eighteen months in prison. These were the first convictions under the Smith "Gag" Act, signed into law by Democratic Party president Franklin Roosevelt in June 1940. This reactionary legislation was aimed at breaking the class-struggle vanguard of the labor movement that was leading opposition to Washington's preparations to drag workers and farmers into the imperialist slaughter of World War II.

An account of the class-struggle leadership of the Teamsters, the labor battles they led, and their fight against government frame-ups can be found in the four-volume series by Farrell Dobbs: *Teamster Rebellion*, *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Politics*, and *Teamster Bureaucracy*. Dobbs was a central leader of these labor battles, and subsequently national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party.

Available from Pathfinder

ON YOUTH

BY V.I. LENIN \$8.95

Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin's speeches on and to young communists in the decades of the 20th century.

Available from bookstores, including those on page 16.

readiness of the active core of miners' leaders to move on to other battles—will be decided in struggle.⁶ A boiler-maker from Alabama took the floor and talked about his memories as a kid and what it had meant when striking miners marched through his hometown. He wants to see that again. Farmers fighting for their land in Georgia and North Carolina started talking about coming to Central Illinois to walk the picket lines together with the miners.

We were putting something together that reaches beyond what was there before. The lines of continuity of any given struggle do not lie primarily in the industry we work in, nor our union, nor the region we live in—although those are realities that shape our struggles. Our continuity is found along the lines of evolution of the working class as a whole, especially the section of it that wants to fight. And a change has begun. Its beginnings are well behind us.

From the origins of the modern communist workers movement 150 years ago, we have measured the success of any struggle by working people by whether or not we emerge more united, more confident of our collective strength, and more powerfully organized to advance the interests of our class and its toiling allies. "Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time," wrote Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the Communist Manifesto, the founding program of our movement. "The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry and that place workers of different localities in contact with one another."⁷

There is a hunger among working people that is greater than in any other section of society, a political hunger among workers and farmers—the fighting coalition that will make up the government that will carry humanity into a new world. It's a hunger for solidarity, for struggle; it's



Militant/Jim Garrison (above)
Above, support rally in Virden, Illinois, for mine workers on strike against Freeman United Coal Co., in October 1998. "The emergence of vanguard layers within the class means the beginning of a process, the opening of a fight for leadership in the labor movement itself." Right, farmers in Sweden protest collapse in pork prices on January 23. Exploited producers on the land face growing crises in all of the imperialist countries.

This is different from what we lived through for more than half a decade. The scope, the intensity, the stick-to-it-iveness, the reach—all this is different.

We've started seeing not only that there are clumps of workers and farmers who are resisting, who are saying "No!" to the demands for sacrifice by the employing class and its government. The beginning of wisdom for us is not just recognizing this, as we did at the 1997 party convention. The key was when we began recognizing that while we've gotten to know these groups of workers and farmers in the *present*, they would not have this kind of present if they didn't also have a political and collective *past*. It's embarrassing for Marxists to have to remind ourselves of that, isn't it?

And if they have this present, and they have a political and collective past, then they have also established political and leadership relations with others and have a political future. They have a present and a future based on relations among people who have stayed the course together. They've worked with other people, and they assume we've done the same. They respect that.

It takes some time to get to know each other, to learn to work together. You can take two very fine units of an army, bring them together, and they'll respond differently to a tactical field situation. They'll do things slightly differently, and one's not necessarily right and the other wrong. It can be two of the several tactics that can advance the fight.

This is true of many of the workers leading the fight against the Crown lockout.⁸ It's true of many of the miners leading the strike against Freeman United in Central Illinois. It makes us think more deeply about the Blue Shirts at Caterpillar in Peoria, who've continued to meet and organize ongoing resistance in the wake of the 1992 and 1994-95 strikes.⁹ It makes us think about other experiences we've had, and to realize that this is a phenomenon involving not just hundreds but thousands of workers and farmers in the United States today, and many more around the world.

These individuals and clumps of workers are the cells of a class-struggle cadre that will grow into the millions as battles accelerate.

Working class ahead of students

We have discussed the degree to which the working

class today is more radical than the student population—more radical from a class standpoint. This may not be unusual in the broad sweep of modern history, but compared to the last several decades in the United States, this is different.

It's not a denigration of students. Changes are also taking place among them. We've had substantial discussion of this, and we are taking advantage of it. But the heart of those changes depend above all on the linkage to struggles of working people in this country. It is through that link that protest activities of youth cease being simply moral witness, whether individual or



collective—cease being temporary acts of rebellion that will ultimately be absorbed, transformed, and perverted by the owners of capital and wielders of power.

For a number of years starting in the late 1950s, we lived through a period during which students moved out ahead of the working class radicalization as a whole—although even this period is often presented inaccurately. Even then a vanguard section of the working population—a section predominantly Black—was ahead of the students, and that was decisive. Most histories of the Vietnam War period and the anti-Vietnam War movement are inaccurate about this. They just have a war going on. They don't include the uprising that gained momentum over a period

Continued on ISR 6



Militant/Flax Hermes
Supporters of Ed Sadlowski for president of the United Steelworkers of America, at union rally in 1975. Struggle for democracy in the USWA became a powerful and attractive campaign not only among Steelworkers but the broader labor movement.

a hunger to learn from each other. A refusal to accept that the pattern of struggles today is decided by past defeats. It's like watching someone weaving something. We can't yet tell what it's going to be. We don't know the details of the pattern; it's too early. We don't know what the ups and downs will be. We can't foresee the specific defeats and victories.

But we know a new pattern is being woven as we come out of the retreat, out of the rulers' final blow-off boom, out of "globalization"—their grandiloquent term for their imperial arrogance and brutal assaults on human dignity the world over. Resisting indignity and isolation, the emerging pattern is taking shape. The vanguard of working people whose actions will define it is increased by every single fighter who reaches out to others and offers to fight.

⁶ On December 17, 1998, members of the three striking UMW locals ratified a contract with Freeman United Coal Company by a vote of 202 to 154. While the pact included union concessions on health benefits, seniority in bidding on jobs, and other aspects of the prior contract with Freeman and the UMWA's 1998 agreement with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association, the central Illinois miners and their union emerged stronger from the 98-day strike. "The strike showed the strength we have," David Yard told the *Militant* newsweekly. "We are not the same people we were 98 days ago. Many guys have gained more confidence and understanding—there's a stronger bond among us."

⁷ See *The Communist Manifesto* (Pathfinder), pp. 31-32.

Back in print!

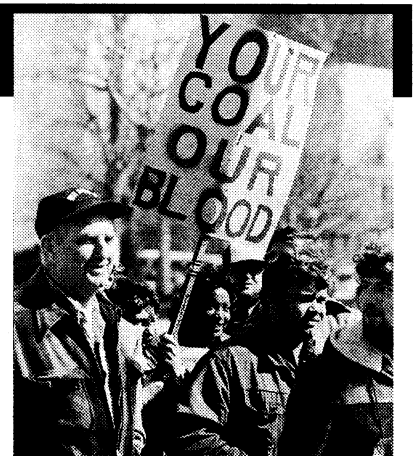
Coal Miners on Strike

Articles reprinted from the *Militant*

❖ The 111-day 1977-78 strike ❖ The 1981 strike and contract rejection vote ❖ The UMWA and the fight against nuclear power ❖ The fight for health benefits and compensation to Black Lung victims \$5.50

Available March 1999

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 16, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.



Socialist Workers in New York and New Jersey chart next steps in building branches and union fractions

BY GREG McCARTAN

NEWARK — After several months of activity to link up with the growing resistance of workers and farmers in the region, Socialist Workers Party members here and in New York held a convention for two evenings and decided to form a New York/New Jersey party district.

The district is made up of the New York and Newark SWP branches, whose members were convention delegates. They elected a District Committee, which will have overall leadership responsibility for the party's work, including the district industrial union fractions in the area, work with exploited farmers and their organizations, jobs committees which organize to help get party members hired into plants in a number of industries, and in defense of the Cuban revolution.

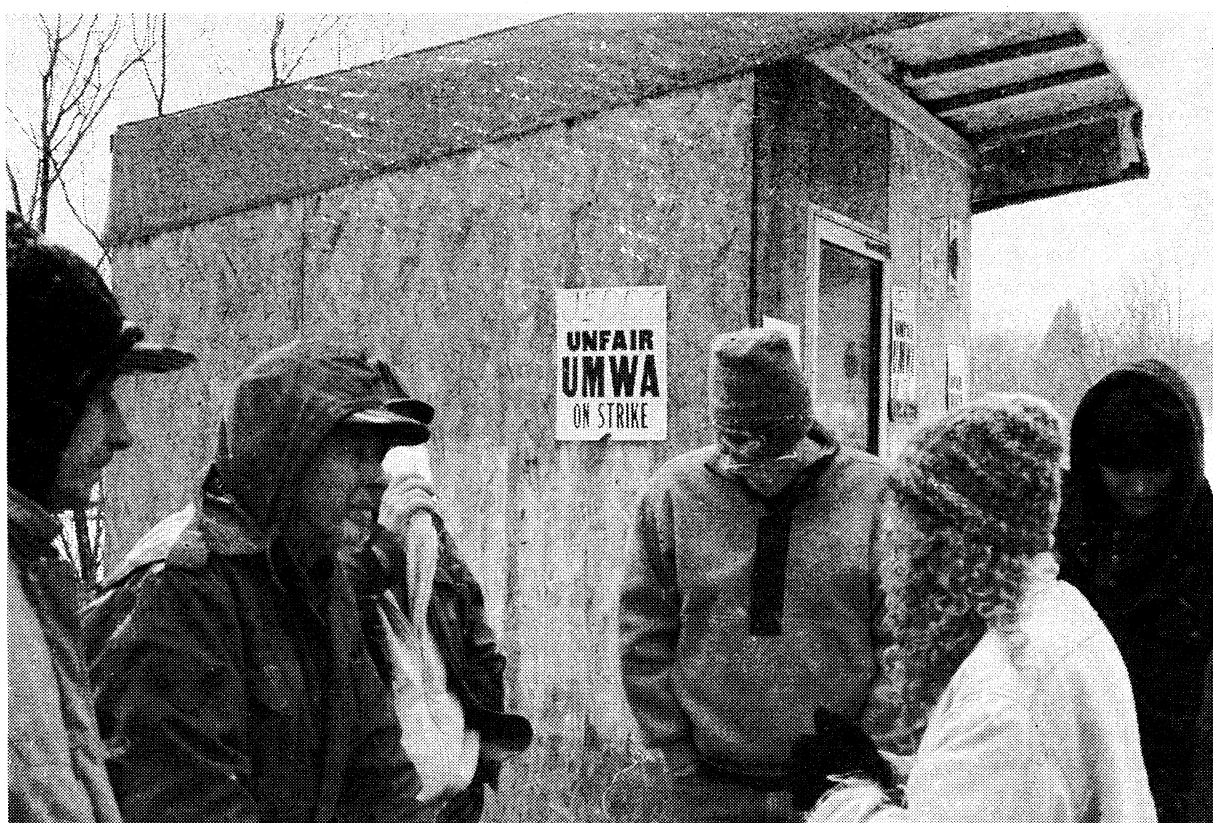
Delegates discussed central issues of politics in the U.S. class struggle as well as the proletarian norms and methods of functioning essential to build a party of worker-Bolsheviks based in the industrial unions.

Joining the meeting were members of the Young Socialists in the area, members of the Philadelphia branch of the party, and several at-large party members. Joel Britton and Greg McCartan represented the party's Political Committee.

What most marked the meeting were the recent steps forward by the Newark and New York branches in what the party calls the "third campaign for the turn." This campaign is aimed at increasing the numbers of party members working in garment shops and textile factories organized by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE); in meatpacking plants organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW); and in coal mines organized by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). The goal of this drive is to transform the work of all eight of the party's industrial union fractions and its integration into a growing mass vanguard of working people in this country.

Building UNITE, UFCW, and UMWA fractions

Since last October the number of socialist workers in UNITE here has grown from two to eight and the number in the UFCW from zero to six. Together with the Philadelphia branch, party and YS members here have also begun regular sales teams and work among coal miners in Penn-



Delegates at district convention described shop-floor skirmishes by meatpackers, an organizing drive getting under way at Continental Airlines, and the strike by members of the United Mine Workers of America at Jeddo Coal Co. in Pennsylvania, shown above.

sylvania as part of building a fraction in the UMWA.

In the reports and discussion delegates described shop-floor skirmishes by meatpackers, the strike by members of the UMWA locals 803 and 1531 against the Jeddo Coal company in Pennsylvania, an organizing drive that is getting a deep response from workers at Continental Airlines, and responses by vanguard workers to an attempt to weaken the union at the Metro-North commuter railroad.

Participants in the meeting assessed they are lagging behind the possibilities to bring workers and farmers involved in and leading these struggles to the convention of the Socialist Workers Party in San Francisco April 1-4 and an active workers conference in Ohio in early August. Building on the accomplishments so far to begin prioritizing collaboration with these fighters as an axis of the work of the branches was seen as decisive in the next stage of the third campaign for the turn.

Washington's wars and military threats

"Every day brings fresh evidence that the imperialist rulers are trying to numb working people to the brutalities and attacks they visit on Iraq and other what they call 'rogue states,'" said Joel Britton, reporting to the meeting for the party's Political Committee. "They are preparing to deploy thousands of additional imperialist troops in Yugoslavia."

Britton pointed to Romanian miners who marched across their country demanding an end to government closings of coal mines and an increase in wages. Such actions "give fresh meaning to our assessment a decade ago that imperialism had lost the cold war and will have to directly take on working people in the workers states in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union," he said.

Whole areas of the world are going through new levels of economic devastation, he said, "the latest being Brazil where the effects of this new stage of the world capitalist crisis marked by financial upheaval and breakdowns will mean sharply rising long-term unemployment and severe austerity measures by the government."

In the United States, Britton said, "we see the

continued polarization of bourgeois politics and the development of Bonapartist figures such as Governor Jesse Ventura in Minnesota." He also pointed to fascist-minded currents, such as that of Patrick Buchanan, who are looking to the future as they build a cadre to seek to counter and defeat in the streets the greater struggles of working people that are coming.

"Working people see the drive to impeach Clinton by the Jefferson Davis Republicans as one aimed at the their rights and the social conquests of oppressed nationalities and women," he said.

Within these world developments "a mass vanguard of working people and farmers, numbering in the tens of thousands in this country is acting and growing," the SWP leader said. "We meet these fighters in strikes, organizing drives, at rallies of farmers, at conferences, in women's committees in the unions, and elsewhere."

Britton pointed to an event February 5 organized by members of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Union (PACE — formerly the OCAW) locked out at Crown Central Petroleum in Pasadena, Texas, that will mark the

third year of their struggle February 5. As part of their reaching out to other struggles, Crown fighters recently linked up with workers fighting a mass firing by Freshwater Farms, a catfish processor in Belzoni, Mississippi.

The Crown workers invited the catfish workers to the anniversary event as well as Titan Tire and other strikers, Steelworkers locked out at Kaiser Aluminum, the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA), and the National Organization for Women.

This gives a small taste of this growing vanguard in this country, Britton pointed out, including the fact that groups of workers and farmers who have been working together for some time have come forward. "We have an opportunity to work side-by-side with them, jointly shouldering responsibilities, getting to know each other, and looking to join our forces."

These groupings are marked by a "militancy in trade union struggles, staunch opposition to the methods and perspectives of the trade union officialdom, and an initial anti-capitalist view, usually starting from the need to defend their unions against government intrusion into their strikes." The SWP, while a small party with no social weight, can have an impact on the outcome of strikes and struggles, Britton said. "Since we are a nationwide party and our industrial union fractions function in a number of unions, we can help bring working people together and help bring struggles together."

Centrality of books and pamphlets by Pathfinder

"We also have the weight of our political weaponry in the books, pamphlets, and *New International* magazine distributed by Pathfinder Press," the SWP leader said. "These are the written-down historical lessons of working-class struggle and the fight for socialism. Being able to read about the history of the struggles of mine workers, the roots of government intervention in the unions and how it can be fought against, and about the struggles being waged today can be an enormous help to unionists on the front lines for whom these lessons have immediate application."

"How strikers and others use and need these books," Britton said, "helped us see the extreme importance of the efforts being made by the party and Young Socialists members in Pathfinder's printshop to insure we can continue to have these necessary political weapons available." Along with steps being taken by the branches and industrial union fractions in the third campaign for the turn, Britton described the concurrent drive by the printshop staff to raise productivity by increasing rates, reducing scrap, and maintaining equipment and machinery in top running condition.

The strike by UMWA members at Jeddo, which has been going on since March 26, 1998, is in the anthracite coal region of eastern Pennsylvania. Party branches have begun doing more serious work with the strikers, Britton said, including building solidarity in the unions they are members of in the region.

New International

A MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY

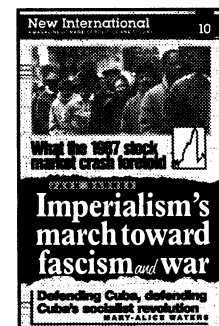
NEW INTERNATIONAL NO. 11

U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

Jack Barnes

Also:

- **IN THIS ISSUE: Ours is the Epoch of World Revolution** Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters
- **Socialism: A Viable Option** José Ramón Balaguer
- **Young Socialists Manifesto** \$14.00



NEW INTERNATIONAL NO. 10

Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War

Jack Barnes \$14.00

NEW INTERNATIONAL NO. 4

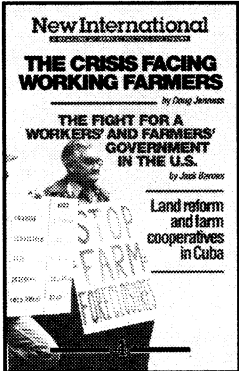
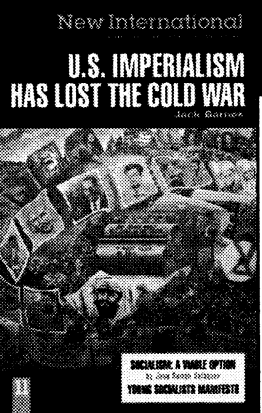
The Fight for a Workers and Farmers Government in the United States

Jack Barnes \$9.00

Also:

- **The Crisis Facing Working Farmers** Jack Barnes
- **Land Reform and Farm Cooperatives in Cuba** Two speeches by Fidel Castro

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 16.



Socialist unionists have gotten a better feel for the Jeddo strike lately by getting more regular teams there and joining events such as a spaghetti dinner hosted by the UMW locals.

Possibilities to transform the work of fractions and branches of the party abound, Britton said, and other vanguard fighters are helping to show how to function as part of these fights.

"We go to strikes as fighting workers bringing solidarity. We can work with other co-workers to take a collection on the job where we can't get official endorsement and money from the union local yet," Britton said. "We can get the strikers' story into the *Militant* and keep working at it together."

Struggle of working farmers

A major aspect of Britton's report and the discussion focused on what steps to take to deepen collaboration with working farmers, including building solidarity with the ongoing struggle of farmers fighting to defend their land and against racist discrimination led by the BFAA and other organizations, primarily made up of farmers who are Black.

"The most important thing we can do to build solidarity with this fight, and to build the March 2 rally in Washington to oppose the proposed settlement the Clinton administration is trying to use to end the struggle against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is to put these farmers into contact with more farmers and their organizations," Britton said, "and with vanguard unionists."

"The issues these farmers are dealing with come out of the crisis facing working farmers, out of conditions of being debt slaves under capitalism. Their connection to the land and determination to continue to grow food and fiber is in common with other U.S. farm families," he said, and their struggle is setting an example and pointing the way forward for all exploited farmers in this country.

Britton explained that the Clinton administration's USDA has been fighting these farmers for years during which they have organized meetings, conferences, rallies, and other protests. They also launched a class-action civil rights lawsuit charging the USDA with widespread discrimination in providing loans and other services.

The Clinton administration then began a counter offensive, describing as a "done deal" a provisional monetary settlement and pressing farmers to accept the proposed \$50,000 compensation payments and end the fight. In this, Britton said, they have the help of the leadership of the major civil rights organizations, trade union officialdom, and elected officials who are Black — forces that are part of the liberal wing of the Democratic party. They are all campaigning along the lines that "while the settlement isn't everything the farmers wanted they should accept it and stop raising hell."

The government's settlement offer received prominent coverage in the liberal big-business media along with statements by prominent civil rights officials, some farmers who were part of the lawsuit, and others supporting the move.

Without recognizing this shift, Britton explained, socialists workers organizing support for the farmers struggle can inadvertently stumble into setbacks for their unions and the farmers' cause.

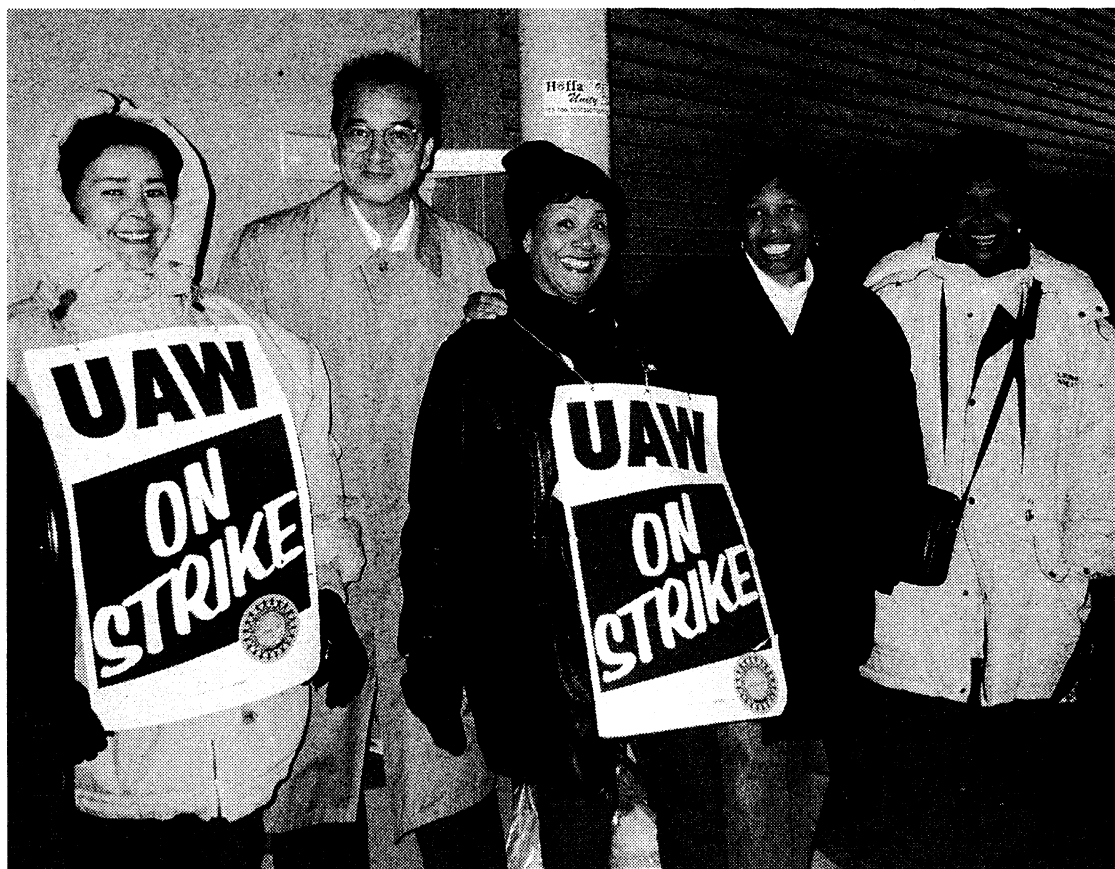
Communist workers have found quite a bit of interest in the farmers struggle among many other workers. Ellie García, for example, a member of the United Transportation Union (UTU) in Newark, sold 26 copies of the *Militant* to other rail workers, many of whom particularly wanted to read about the fight. Two co-workers joined her in Washington to hear Grant speak at Howard University the day after the district convention.

In meetings to prepare the convention socialist workers in the UTU discussed how they made a misstep by deciding to press for official support for the farmers' fight at one union meeting, which took place soon after the government counteroffensive had begun. They were unprepared for the discussion and opposition expressed by some union members to the local taking up the farmers' struggle.

This experience helped all of the party's union fractions step back and get a more accurate view of recent developments and to learn or relearn the importance of knowing the views of a broad number of workers and union officials in weighing how to pursue solidarity with a struggle in the union. "These experiences help us get more oriented to farmers and fighting workers, social forces who can provide a long-term basis of support for the next steps in the farmers' struggle," Britton said.

Shake-up in rail unions

Party members in the UTU were recently approached by two members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) who work at the Metro-North commuter rail road in New York for collaboration on an important struggle



Progress in rebuilding fractions in the garment, meatpacking, and coal mining industries and advancing work among vanguard fighters "is key to recruiting to the Young Socialists," one convention delegate said. Above, workers at Standard Motors in Queens, New York, on strike in October 1998. Socialists are putting the work to bring co-workers and other workers and farmers involved in struggles to party convention in April at center of their tasks.

that has opened up there.

Over the past half year, a merger between the UTU and BLE has been under negotiation by top officials of the union with direct prodding by AFL-CIO president John Sweeney and secretary-treasurer Richard Trumka. The two unions recently announced they will form a new union, the North American Rail and Transportation Union (NARTU).

Doug Hord, who worked on the railroad before volunteering to work in Pathfinder's printshop, explained in the convention discussion that the rail unions have historically been divided along craft lines as the officials of the unions put their interests above those of the union membership. The continued existence of numerous craft unions, rather than organizing on industrial basis, has weakened the power of workers in the industry and been a source of constant divisions among the membership. "Being opposed to craft unionism is part of our program," Hord explained. "It will be very useful to collaborate with fighters at Metro-North to become part of this discussion."

Over the past two decades the rail bosses themselves have eliminated many jobs and classifications in their drive to cut costs. The leadership of the various unions failed to organize a fight to defend crew sizes, work rules, oppose job combinations, and other crucial aspects of union rights essential to safety and the lives and livelihoods of rail work workers and the public. Two-tier wage structures were allowed.

These attacks have borne down most heavily on workers in freight but also hit those in passenger rail as well. Since the mid-1980s in freight new workers are hired for the position of conductor/engineer. They must accept "forced promotion" as a condition of employment. This concession by the union officials gives the company flexibility to use these workers in either job.

Based on this the UTU officials filed for a representation election with the National Mediation Board on the basis that there is now a new classification of worker, the "train and engine service employee." BLE officials protested to the AFL-CIO that this was a raiding operation, a position that was upheld by the labor federation. After pressure from AFL-CIO tops, officials from the two unions

agreed through a series of negotiations to form the new union.

Two members of the UTU and BLE locals at Metro-North drew up a letter opposing the merger and proposing their local membership sign cards for a representation election for a breakaway outfit called the Association of Commuter Rail Employees (ACRE). The letter condemns the "failed policies" of the UTU and BLE; claims that the "wage package, benefits, and working conditions we [at Metro-North] have negotiated for ourselves far exceed anything either of these former Internationals have achieved"; and promises "to protect individual craft distinctions and provide craft autonomy" in the new setup.

Ruth Nebbia, a member of the UTU at Conrail, said supporters of the *Militant* organized a plant gate sale at Metro-North. One engineer stopped and talked for 15 minutes, and explained how he was opposing ACRE. More than 700 of 1,000 union members have signed cards for a representation election, according to workers at the gate, many because they are fed up with the policies of top UTU and BLE officialdom. Nebbia said that workers explained that a significant minority of engineers were wary of this move, especially since they were in the middle of contract negotiations with the bosses.

"The two union fighters who approached the party see this divisive move to form ACRE as a real danger to the union. They are discussing with co-workers how this kind of craft oriented, split-off union will weaken rail workers," Nebbia said.

"Our stand," Britton said, "is not to join in the 'pro-merger' campaign by the UTU and BLE officials. Socialist workers explain why we need to build a fighting labor movement and advocate the establishment of an industrial union in the rail industry. If it comes to a membership vote, socialists will vote 'yes.'" While there is no rank-and-file struggle propelling the merger, he said, "ending the craft division of union members operating the trains creates the potential for rail workers to be a bit more united."

"This is just one example of something happening in our unions where fighters step forward and where we have a chance to knit or reknit contact with vanguard layers of our class," Britton concluded.

Phyllis O'Rielly, a leader of the party and Young Socialists in the district, explained that "progress in building our fractions and in what we're doing among vanguard fighters is the key to recruiting to the YS. What we're beginning to do helps show young people the kind of effective revolutionary organization they can be a part of."

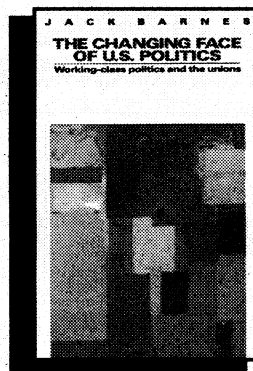
Eva Braiman presented a report to the meeting on the tasks of socialists workers over the coming months.

"We want to get on a campaign, and put at the heart of what we do, of collaboration with vanguard workers and farmers in our area to come to the party convention in San Francisco and the active workers conference in Ohio this summer," Braiman said. "We need detailed discussions in the branches and fractions about who is interested in going, how we can work together to get there, and what classes or other activities we should do together."

Braiman is a member of the UFCW who works in the lower Manhattan meatpacking district. "A young meatpacker," she said, "is interested in attending the convention and said he thought it would be the kind of place you can really talk to people who understand what we're going through."

Braiman related an example of a struggle against forced overtime that took place shortly after she was hired. Work-

Continued on ISR 10



FROM PATHFINDER

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

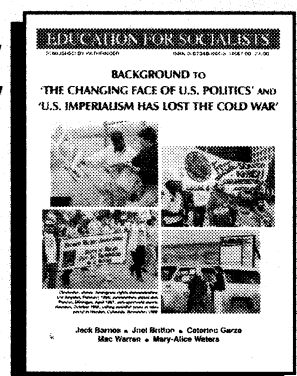
JACK BARNES

A handbook for workers coming into the factories, mines, and mills, as they react to the uncertain life, turmoil, and brutality of capitalism in the closing years of the twentieth century. It shows how millions of workers, as political resistance grows, will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all of society. Also available in Spanish and French. \$19.95

Background to "The Changing Face of U.S. Politics" and "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War"

JACK BARNES, JOEL BRITTON, AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

Reports and resolutions of the Socialist Workers Party on trade union policy, proletarian leadership versus clique functioning, the poison of race baiting in the workers movement, and the membership norms of the revolutionary party. A companion to *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* and to "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War," the 1990 SWP political resolution featured in *New Internationalist* no. 11. An Education for Socialists booklet. \$7.00



Available from bookstores listed on page 16, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Fax: (212) 727-0150. Please include \$3.00 for shipping and handling.

Continued from ISR 3

of years, the revolutionary movement being led by the political vanguard of the Black population of the United States. What happened in those years was more complex than is usually portrayed, and the interconnections deeper.

But what is happening today is new. That's a fact. The Socialist Workers Party right now is recruiting individual young workers who we meet accidentally, who we bump into in the course of struggles, as we sell papers in neighborhoods and at plant gates, someone's boyfriend or girlfriend, who knows, who cares? We bump into them and we recruit them to a workers party. And we could be recruiting more.

This is a change. I was reminded of how much a change by the remarks of Robin Maisel, the comrade in the wheelchair who spoke during the discussion on the second day of the conference. Robin was deeply involved in the opposition campaign in the United Steelworkers union in 1975-77—the campaign for democracy, to elect Ed Sadlowski president of the USWA. I remember how powerful and attractive that campaign became, and what it did. I remember its connection with a layer of savvy union miners who had been through the struggles of the Black Lung Association in West Virginia and of the Miners for Democracy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It sometimes seemed as if half the cadres of the Sadlowski campaign were miners on leave, especially throughout the South. But the Steelworkers Fight Back campaign was primarily linked to a long history of struggle in the Steelworkers union itself. That struggle rose, it reached out, it didn't find a large echo, and it fell. Many people in this room were part of that experience, were changed by it, changed for the better.¹⁰

What is different now is that while the outcome of no single battle is guaranteed, neither is any battle ordained

have known and worked with—Ray Dunne¹¹ and Farrell Dobbs—referred to a fellow worker as *competent*, that was the highest accolade they could give. It meant those workers didn't get fighters they were responsible for unnecessarily injured or killed. It meant they maximized the gains possible out of every situation, and did so in such a way that those with the greatest imagination accomplished a little bit of the impossible. It meant they were premature Cubans. Or perhaps, old Bolsheviks. The same thing.

This change is the most important thing for us to absorb. What we've seen come together at this conference is the only possible trajectory for the Socialist Workers Party. It is the road we will march along from here to the San Francisco convention, and on to an even larger Active Workers conference in Ohio late in the summer.

Is there anything in the working-class movement to reach for other than those layers—individuals, but also now layers—who want to fight? To those who, in the process

of fighting, desire to meet each other, go through new experiences together and, as Malcolm said, want to broaden their scope, to read, to think. They want to discuss with people who are straight with them, who they are fighting alongside, in order to figure out answers to the broader questions posed by a social system that on a world scale seems more and more out of control, in crisis, gruesome to behold.

There is nothing idiosyncratic about what came together here at this conference. The Socialist Workers Party is a small vanguard formation. The United States is nowhere close to being on the verge of a revolutionary upheaval. The acts of the Socialist Workers Party do not carry social weight in the normal sense of the word. We don't have to take back any of the cold, objective observations along these lines that we have made. They are correct, revolutionary, materialist statements. But being wrong on this score is not our greatest danger.

The greatest danger we've faced for a while now is not recognizing the degree to which every fighting worker and workers grouping that uses its strength, imagination, commitment, integrity, and capacity—that acts in a timely fashion, with all the weight it has—can work in a way that brings together on a national and international scale



Teamsters in Minneapolis clash with pro-company thugs during 1934 strike. For Ray Dunne and Farrell Dobbs, leaders of that struggle, the term "competent" was the highest accolade they could give a fellow trade unionist. "It meant those workers didn't get fighters they were responsible for unnecessarily injured or killed. It meant they maximized the gains possible out of every situation, and did so in such a way that those with the greatest imagination accomplished a little bit of the impossible."

do not have a class character per se, that their class character is derived from their connections to the political formations in the country that reflect the interests of the basic social classes. He insisted that youth go through a period in their lives when they are in fact part of no class. They are in the process politically of becoming part of a class, in the midst of making that decision in thought and in action.¹²

In this world of accelerating capitalist disorder, where all of us gradually absorb into muscle and bone the meaning of class polarization, the propertied rulers will offer us more executions, more imperialist military assaults, more storm troopers (like private security gangs), more brutality, more social dislocation, more attempts to deny rights to working people who become determined to fight back. That's what they offer with all the degradations their system breeds. Those who are fighting against that reality offer an opposite road to young people, the possibility to join with others who have the social power to realize a different future.

Above all, the task of the Socialist Workers Party in collaborating with the Young Socialists is to organize to go with them to the working people of this country who are engaged in struggle, simultaneously reading and discussing the history and ideas that will help them understand the social realities they are repelled by and are determined to find a way to change.

I hope every Young Socialists chapter and individual YS member who reads and studies the 1990 Socialist Workers Party resolution "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War" does it together with an SWP unit.¹³ Likewise, every SWP branch should find Young Socialists, current and future, to collaborate with in organizing those classes. Above all, I urge both the party and the youth to discuss this resolution and other basic communist literature with workers and farmers involved in politics, trade union struggles, and other forms of organizing.



Reading and discussing with others the experiences and working-class tradition captured in the books and pamphlets produced and circulated by the communist movement becomes more and more important. Above, bindery of Pathfinder printshop, which keeps this arsenal in print.

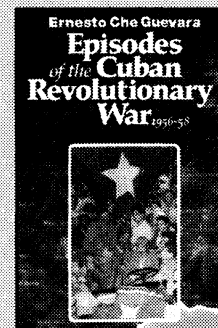
to lose. This places great weight on being serious about politics, serious about tactics. It places great weight on competence. When the greatest working-class leaders I

¹⁰ Steelworkers Fight Back was launched in 1975 under the leadership of United Steel Workers District 31 director Ed Sadlowski to oust the entrenched regime of USWA president I.W. Abel. A central issue in the campaign was the fight to extend union democracy, including the right of the membership to vote on contracts. The election was held February 8, 1977. According to the official results, Sadlowski received 43 percent of the vote. He received a majority of votes of workers in large mills. See *The Fight for Union Democracy in Steel* by Andy Rose (Pathfinder, 1976).

Pathfinder

Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956-58
Ernesto Che Guevara

This book is his firsthand account of the military campaigns and political events that culminated in the January 1959 popular insurrection that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship in Cuba. With clarity and humor, Ernesto Che Guevara describes his own political education. He explains how the struggle transformed the men and women of the Rebel Army and July 26 Movement led by Fidel Castro. And how these combatants forged a political leadership capable of guiding millions of workers and peasants to open the socialist revolution in the Americas. \$23.95



Available from bookstores, including those on page 16.

these experiences of working people. It can affect events. It can attract other sections of the population to the liberating spirit of these battles—beginning with the youth, beginning with those who don't have a million conservatizing worries and commitments draped on them from the past.

There are many things written about youth and their attitudes, their values, and some of them are true. What is forgotten by analysts who are outside the working-class movement, however, is the attraction of youth to the alternative offered by the working class, the kind of lifelong political trajectory that is open to each individual young person, regardless of class background. Lenin, who was no romantic on these questions, insisted that youth

¹¹ A founding member of the Communist Party in the United States in 1919, and later of the Socialist Workers Party, Vincent Ray Dunne was part of the Minneapolis-based class-struggle leadership of the Teamsters union in the 1930s. Along with Farrell Dobbs, Dunne was one of the eighteen Teamsters and Socialist Workers Party leaders convicted in the 1941 Smith Act trial.

Workers who want to fight effectively know they'll never win if they have to reinvent the wheel every day. They resist giving up conquered ground. They want to learn from the lessons of past battles. They know previous sacrifices cannot be allowed to have been in vain. Given the changes in politics today, the concrete working-class traditions captured in the books and pamphlets produced and circulated by the communist movement becomes more and more important. These tools are literally irreplaceable; they are weapons of a fighting class, not just its leading party. Many before us bled—and, yes, died—in the fights out of which these lessons were learned. That's why the stakes are so high in keeping in print the entire arsenal of books and pamphlets published and distributed by Pathfinder—from works coming out of more contemporary experience, such as *The Changing Face of*

¹² See "Youth and the Communist Movement," the final talk in this collection.

¹³ "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War" is featured in issue no. 11 of the Marxist magazine *New International*.

U.S. Politics, the issues of *New International* magazine, and a broad range of pamphlets on current struggles and political topics; to classics of the communist movement by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg, James P. Cannon, Farrell Dobbs, and others.¹⁴

Along this course, movements of social protest of which young people are a part will begin to be marked by a different character, because the activism of communist-minded youth brings a new element into them. Young Socialists are often the bearers of the linkage to the working-class movement within these protest movements. And they will be an obstacle to those who want to lead such movements on a different class trajectory.

We are not the only ones who think youth are important. Great energy—more bounce to the ounce—is attractive to all classes and all layers, to be used for their own purposes. We should never have the illusion others aren't after this energy too. Every intelligent employer is always looking for ways to absorb this energy. The trade union bureaucracy, the Democratic Party, every political current within the working-class movement, every rightist current outside the working-class movement—all are seeking young, live forces.

Trade unions and the state

One of the great truths of our epoch will now become increasingly evident. There will be more and more state interference in the trade unions, because the employers and bureaucracy alone can't always handle well-organized, intelligent militants. The same will be true for organizations of militant farmers, debt slaves.

The state—the government, cops, courts, National Guard, bourgeois parties, including, yes, the Democratic Party—all will come to be seen as the enemies they are,

surprised. We must not depend on any of these institutions in their current form. These organizations as they exist today are *not* what they will inevitably become. Functioning as if this is not the class truth can only lead working people to unnecessary and sometimes devastating defeats.

We often say our goal is to transform the unions into revolutionary instruments of class struggle, and we excoriate anyone who would walk away from this effort within the unions as they currently exist, no matter how difficult the obstacles. I don't believe there's a single voice of dissent about that in this room. But we should understand. When we say existing union



"In this world of accelerating capitalist disorder, the propertied rulers will offer us more executions, more imperialist military assaults, more storm troopers, more brutality, more social dislocation, more attempts to deny rights to working people who become determined to fight back." Top, Miners in Romania on march toward Bucharest demanding higher wages and a halt to pit closures, with tear-gas grenade launcher taken from cops who tried to break up their protest, January 1999. Left, U.S. president William Clinton in south Korea, where Washington has 40,000 heavily armed troops. Bottom, peasants in Bogar, Indonesia, protest worsening conditions, September 1998.



ture holds in store, including in Minnesota. That anticipation is what was decisive to the votes cast by a number of them.¹⁶

Bourgeois confidence begins to shatter

If we are right about all this, another shift is occurring. The confidence of the bourgeoisie is starting to get shakier. Belief in the eternity of ever-inflating paper assets, of the great stock and bond financial bubbles, is crumbling. I don't know how fast the changes will come. But I do know the key to the world capitalist economy is in this country right here. The United States of America, led by the most rapacious ruling class in history, was supposed to be able to police the world, to dominate the world, to be the only strategic pole in the world. It was supposed to purchase the goods of the world if necessary, to take over the banks and factories of the world when possible, to straighten out other countries, including other imperialist powers. You can say that no one ever really believed it was going to be like that, but I don't think that's decisive. The U.S. rulers *did* come to act as if they believed it.

When things happened that seemed to cut across their world dominance, the U.S. ruling class read them as contradictions that could be dealt with by changing presidents, or Congresses, or adjusting policies. This was their attitude, their tactical stance. It reflected their confidence. This flexibility gave solidity to their two-party system, to their social contract, to their more and more bipartisan domestic policy. That's changing. And as the confidence and homogeneity start to disintegrate, we will see the be-



Militant/Hank Scheer

the bitter, brutal enemies of labor organizing to defend itself. Fighting along these lines leads vanguard layers of workers toward a program, a pattern of activity taking broader positions defending the interests of those who are fighting together with them. This leads them to further conflicts, and the necessity to fight to create democratic formations in the unions in order to expand solidarity. Political independence from the state and employers becomes a precondition to exercising simple solidarity.

We must keep our eyes on the ranks of labor while the institutions around us shatter. This is important. Under conditions of class polarization, Bonapartism, and economic catastrophe, the institutions within the working-class movement—like other popular institutions that have evolved in ways allowing them to function under "normal" conditions—will not be stable. They will tend to shatter.

As this happens the employers will be surprised. The labor bureaucracy will be surprised. But we must not be

structures will shatter, this is not simply a prediction. It is more and more a statement of fact today, and it indicates a course of struggle, a course of action, a line of march. We don't start with the unions as they exist, but with those who are or should be the members of these unions. The ranks, that's who our eyes are on.

It's becoming less uncommon to have more than one union in places where previously this was not true. There will be more AMFAs.¹⁵ At the same time, while the officialdom does nothing to organize the growing numbers of nonunion workers in industrial workplaces, they are carrying out mergers with unions in unrelated sectors of the workforce, thereby weakening the industrial character of the union movement. Such shifts will not be a true register of what is happening in the labor movement, however. The important register will be what is happening within the *ranks* of labor as currents organize and combat experience grows.

The pace of politics is increasing, and we can't make the mistake of thinking that all working people are waiting for something to happen to *them* before they react. As the economic crisis becomes devastating in Indonesia, in Korea; as it becomes devastating in Russia, and throughout Africa; as crisis begins to rear its head in Latin America once more, workers in this country read and think about it. They begin to see the future coming toward them. The former attitude was: "Devastation elsewhere is horrible, but it won't happen here." That is shifting. Now workers can imagine devastation striking home. Some of them anticipate it and act on that anticipation. And that is part of the sea change we are discussing.

Yesterday we discussed the surprise election of the Bonapartist candidate Jesse Ventura to the governor's mansion in Minnesota. I made the point that I don't have a scientific way of weighing all the variables that affected how people voted, electing Ventura by a substantial majority and catching everyone off guard—including the SWP unit in that state. But I do know one thing. It was not economic and social conditions in Minnesota itself that were decisive in that election. Different classes and sections of classes there recognize the evolution of conditions around the world, and they *anticipate* what the fu-

¹⁵ The company-minded officialdom of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) has organized raiding operations to break off mechanics employed by Northwest Airlines, Alaska Airlines, and elsewhere from the International Association of Machinists (IAM), which has traditionally organized mechanics in common locals with ramp workers and other more poorly paid airline workers. Some IAM members have voted for recertification out of a desire for a *change* from the officialdom's refusal to wage a fight to defend the interests of union members. The bureaucracy of the Machinists union has sought to parry AMFA's challenge by adapting to its reactionary orientation. In its unsuccessful effort in late 1998 to repel the AMFA challenge at Northwest, for example, the IAM bureaucracy aped AMFA's craft mentality by establishing a separate district for mechanics.

¹⁴ The thirst for knowledge of previous struggles among layers of vanguard fighters has spurred Pathfinder to put back in print a number of pamphlets on labor battles and political questions from the 1970s and 1980s that have not been available for a number of years. These include pamphlets on the 1977-78 UMW coal miners strike; the 1975-77 campaign for union democracy in the United Steelworkers union waged by Steelworkers Fight Back; the fight for affirmative action in steel and other basic industries; and others.

¹⁶ For further discussion of the emergence of Bonapartist figures in U.S. bourgeois politics, see the talk elsewhere in this book on, "The Vote for Ross Perot and Patrick Buchanan's 'Culture War': What the 1992 Elections Revealed."

KARL MARX
FREDERICK ENGELS
The
**COMMUNIST
MANIFESTO**



From Pathfinder

The Communist Manifesto

KARL MARX,
FREDERICK ENGELS

"Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time," write Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the communist movement's founding programmatic document. "The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry and that places workers of different localities in contact with one another." Also in Spanish. \$3.95

Available from bookstores, including those on page 16.



Above: Militant/Jon Hillson
Members of United Steelworkers of America Local 8888 celebrate victory in 1979 strike for union recognition at Tenneco shipyard in Newport News, Virginia.

Fight for a workers and farmers government can only be accomplished "by putting together a large group — disciplined, fighting working people who have learned patience, determination, strategy; who have worked together to figure out how to get there." At right, soldiers in Cuba, where workers and peasants overturned U.S.-backed dictatorship in 1959 and took power from the capitalists and landlords.

gining of the breakup of the two-party system. That bipartisan setup is not the same thing as the domination by the Democrats and Republicans within bourgeois politics. But the *two-party system* as we have known it for decades is now showing signs of its future decomposition. That is one of the benchmarks that Ventura's victory registers.

A comrade in Minneapolis just E-mailed me an article about a meeting two days ago of the Minnesota state AFL-CIO Executive Council that governor-elect Ventura was asked to address. They had to invite him, of course. The reporter says Ventura "gave the state's top union officials a public tongue-lashing." He mainly told them how during the campaign he had stood up to "union goons" who tried to stop him from crossing a picket line to enter a meeting. "I walked up to the biggest one. I looked him right in the eye, and I said very quietly, 'I strongly suggest you get out of the way.' He did."

Ventura spoke to these bureaucrats in a manner they are unaccustomed to hearing from a newly elected governor of any party. He addressed them with an in-your-face aggressiveness that they deferred to—and that, most importantly, posed a danger to the entire labor movement. He told the AFL-CIO officials he disagreed with a minimum wage, that government shouldn't set "the wage floor for private businesses." He told them he disagrees with the concept of a "living wage." You take what you can bargain for.

And Ventura excoriated them for not endorsing him, for not having a "bigger vision" extending beyond the Democratic Party. He reminded them how often they had begun backing "losers." They then gave him polite applause. "We applaud you for your candor and your straight-ahead style," one of the labor bureaucrats told him. Another called Ventura "a straight shooter," ta-da-ta-da-da.

When a reporter present interviewed the heads of the Minnesota AFL-CIO after Ventura spoke, their main comment was that Ventura is right about one thing: they are on a losing electoral course. "It's evident that the way we're

going we haven't been very successful." We keep endorsing candidates that don't win. We're discussing pursuing another course, they told the press.

This is typical. This is how the class-collaborationism of the labor officials and other misleaders of the mass movement—like the worst misleaders of the Black movement who Gary Grant spoke of at some length during his presentation—pave the way for Bonapartism, which in turn greases the skids for fascism. It's a process that takes time. It doesn't happen without struggle and differentiation. But that is the process that occurs as a long wave of world capitalist expansion comes to an end, stability erodes, and the institutions of class rule begin to shatter.

In the years that led up to World War II, throughout Europe, we saw this same process in country after country. Disappointment and frustration with the policies of class-collaborationist misleaders opened the door to support among broad sections of the middle class and even



strikes.

That gathering must be a get-together, a regroupment of forces, an introduction of all these fighters to each other, so they can see that in combination their forces are much larger than they themselves know. We must unlock every struggle from any narrow picture of its own history—and by narrow, I mean any single chain of cause and effect—and put it in this world as it's becoming. That's the road to a whole that is truly more powerful than the sum of its parts. But that takes mutual confidence gained through common combat experience, political clarity, and organization.

Obstacles falling

Recently a unionist from Norway visited the locked-out Crown workers in Houston. He came to offer the support of his union, and I was struck by the weight, the importance that a layer of the most conscious workers resisting the lockout correctly gave to that act of solidarity.

We said almost a decade ago that the world in becoming would be marked at the new millennium by the absence of the major obstacles of the previous century, by

the absence of obstacles to working people worldwide seeking to exchange their experiences in struggle. We said it would be impossible for state powers to clamp down on this, and it would be impossible for any political current to dictate who you could or who you could not work with.

That's what ended with the fall of the Stalinist monolith. It ended for all time, as we explain in detail in our 1990 resolution, "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War." We're now seeing the first baby steps of what that means in practice. We start with the Socialist Workers Party, with the Young Socialists, with our co-thinkers around the world, and with comrades-in-arms in any just fight that's going on. We start together. There is no limit to the speed and character of how this solidarity can be

"The task in collaborating with Young Socialists is to go with them to working people in struggle, simultaneously reading and discussing books that will help them understand the social realities they are determined to change."

some layers of workers for demagogic Bonapartist figures. Bonapartism then prepared the way for rising fascist movements to triumph without any serious struggle from a working class that had been demoralized and disoriented by its class-collaborationist and violently factional misleaders. We're starting to see similar things again. But they don't have to reach the same outcome.

Underestimating ourselves

When struggles break out today, we don't have any idea what is possible until we've exhausted the expansion of solidarity, exhausted the outreach, including the international character of it. There are no limits to what can be accomplished until the dialectic, the give-and-take, between the struggle and its supporters worldwide has been played out to the end.

The greatest problem we face is that working people who are fighting underestimate what we are capable of, what we are actually accomplishing. We don't recognize ourselves as the true bearers of culture and decency into the new millennium. This we will learn in struggle together.

One of the goals for the April 1999 San Francisco convention of the Socialist Workers Party and the conference that will surround it—a conference that will be the common work of the SWP and Young Socialists—must be to take the comrades who are here, our comrades-in-arms in sections of the mass movement who are not yet members of our party, and increase the number of them in attendance by five- or ten-fold. We hope more of the militants with whom they are standing shoulder to shoulder will attend, and we want to work with them to make that possible. We must bring fighters from other struggles we are involved in—Ireland, Puerto Rico, Cuba, police brutality, women's rights, immigrant battles, farmers' protests, other

organized, this convergence, this fusion of the efforts of vanguard layers who are fighting. And nothing could possibly be more important in the transformation of the Socialist Workers Party, its activity and proletarian character, and the meaning of the third campaign for the turn.

The interaction of these forces is truly what will "bring to life *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*," as the Young Socialists comrades so aptly named the panel they organized on the second night of this conference. This is what people in this room have worked so hard for. And now it is we who must move toward this combination of effort, of solidarity, opening ourselves up to those engaged in struggle right now.

I truly meant it when I said in my talk yesterday that we must have a perspective, over time, wherever possible of fusing our party with the small parties-in-formation that are coming out of struggles today. These small groups of vanguard fighters have a history together. They have tested themselves in combat, learned to know and trust each other, and have a great time working and fighting together. They anticipate future battles that incorporate the lessons of today, and their struggles are leading them to start talking about broader questions and to the conclusion that there's something rotten about capitalism. These are men and women who literally have already donned their shrouds and are going to continue fighting, regardless of the consequences. They're the new Cubans in this country. They are us. That's who we are, too. And we want to work together, to converge. We want to be in the same party.

We will transform our movement together. We will find ourselves in small towns as well as large cities. I was reminded by one of the veterans of the Steelworkers Local 8888 battles in Newport News present here this weekend that this is the twentieth anniversary of our movement establishing a branch in Newport News, Virginia, so we

Available from Pathfinder

Letters from Prison

A Revolutionary Party Prepares for Post-WWII Labor Battles

JAMES P. CANNON

Prison correspondence of a revolutionary leader jailed during World War II. Discusses how to educate and organize a communist movement able to stand up to wartime repression and prepare for the big labor battles that were emerging during the closing years of the war. \$21.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 16, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150.



could more effectively fight shoulder to shoulder with others to advance that struggle.¹⁷ I don't remember for sure if we still had the Richmond, Virginia, branch when we moved into Newport News and into the struggle of 8888. A number of heads are nodding yes, so I guess we did. That was fun, right? Having a branch of the Socialist Workers Party in Bobby Lee's Confederate capital, at the same time we were in Newport News.

There are people here who built an SWP branch in Price, Utah. In Peoria, Illinois. In Charleston and Morgantown, West Virginia. In Louisville, Kentucky, and Cincinnati, Ohio. In Seaside, California. In Austin, Minnesota. In Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio, Texas. In Omaha, Nebraska, and Albany, New York. And in other cities, small and large, too numerous to list. I'm not making a prediction. I'm not saying we should go someplace in particular. I'm saying we are open to that course, and we will follow it. We will have the courage of our convictions, and our movement's leadership will be defined by a sensitivity, a responsiveness, and a competence in moving in this direction. Political openings and responsibilities will determine organizational forms.

When we published the SWP resolution "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War" in *New Internationalist* no. 11 a few months ago, we put it side by side with, we yoked it together with, the "Young Socialists Manifesto," a kindred proclamation issued this year by the other communist organization in this country that the Socialist Workers Party has a special relationship with. We noted that the "Young Socialists Manifesto" was the piece that brought the entire contents of the magazine into focus as

¹⁷ Workers at the giant Tenneco shipyard in Newport News, Virginia, struck for eighteen weeks in early 1979 to win recognition for their union, United Steelworkers Local 8888. They won recognition later that year.



Militant photos: Adrienne Kaplan (above), Mark Satinoff (right) Efforts by socialist workers today to rebuild concentrations in garment, meatpacking, and coal mining industries is key to forging the kind of party branches and trade union fractions that can meet the demands of class struggle today. Above, garment workers rally in Connecticut in 1989 in solidarity with miners on strike at Pittston Coal. Right, meatpackers and supporters in Austin, Minnesota, during 1985-86 strike against Hormel.

a guide to revolutionary practice.

In the introductory article to that issue of *New Internationalist*, we also insisted on some other facts.¹⁸ We began with the statement that "the opportunities for organizations of communist workers and of youth to act together along the lines presented in the pages that follow have been expanding at least since early 1997."

"Signs of renewed defensive action are all around us," we noted. "More numerous strike actions reflecting the tenacity and resistance of the embattled ranks; a noticeable growth in the confidence and determination of women in industry—" (At least in our discussions since then, we have gotten out numerous examples confirming the accuracy of this judgment about women in industry. I don't know why it is so difficult, but it has been like pulling teeth to get comrades to talk about what is happening and what they are doing. Then, once we start, all the experiences we're living through, the women's committees and other experiences, begin pouring out.) "—the increased weight of Black leadership in labor battles and struggles of working farmers; an upswing in the Puerto Rican independence movement; more actions in defense of immigrants' rights." And if the reports we've heard here are correct, we should add that we are seeing a revival of some aspects of the Chicano movement as well.

If these things are true, however, if this new resistance among toilers in this country is a fact, then something else is happening as well. The relationship between the ranks and the officialdom is being altered—potentially, and in reality.

This shift means that political work among women, for example, and talk about the place of the fight for women's rights should start getting a different kind of hearing than it did four, five, six years ago. Such work takes on greater weight.

Is it true that "the weight of Black leadership in labor battles and struggles of working farmers" has increased? We wrote that phrase several months ago. Is it true, or not? It's a factual question. We must make a judgment. Don't we see it, don't we hear it? Didn't we see a manifestation of it here? If the statement is true, it means new possibilities of changing leadership

¹⁸ See "Ours Is the Epoch of World Revolution" by Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters, in *New Internationalist* no. 11.

in the Black community itself—a bridge from fighters with a lifetime of struggle experience (not those who at one time fought and later lost their way) to a new generation of younger fighters emerging today. And it also means a new impetus to the struggle of working farmers throughout this country against land loss and debt slavery.

Don't these things mean we should be getting a slightly different response to a revolutionary newspaper when we sell the *Militant* in the Black community? To thinking farmers? Among the ranks of workers, both men and women?

Isn't the same thing true about the Puerto Rican independence struggle? Is that not our experience?

The shift in the working class, in the mass psychology of the toilers, in the emergence of vanguard layers within the class, means



the beginning of a process, the opening of a fight for leadership in the labor movement itself.

This is the question of questions. This is what the San Francisco convention of the Socialist Workers Party should be about. This is why no matter what else, we will not postpone that convention.

Yesterday I said all you had to do was drive up Highway 1 from here in Los Angeles to get to the San Francisco convention. An old California hand told me I was wrong: you can't just drive up Highway 1 this time of the year; it's washed out. I say that's not talking like a Cuban. So Highway 1 is washed out? So what? You can still get to San Francisco that way.

We must study "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War" and retake it ourselves. We must do the same with the companion book of resolutions and reports adopted in the early 1990s by the Socialist Workers Party that Pathfinder will be publishing under the title *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. These are tools, instruments to guide revolutionary practice, for every serious militant among working people.

As this process deepens, politics will not get simpler. Political work will get more complex, because bourgeois politics is marked by fewer and fewer long-run trends. Can you name any long-term trends in bourgeois politics today that are not more quickly short-circuited, that are not contradicted by counterprocesses?

We've talked about the shift to the left in bourgeois politics, for example. There's no question that's true. It is a preemptive shift out of weakness, in anticipation of the crisis that is deepening and the resistance that is accelerating. But we're talking about left and right within bourgeois politics. We should remember that every major war of the twentieth century has been brought to us by those riding under the banner of bourgeois liberalism. At the same time that the percentage of Democrats in Congress grows, the bipartisan policies they carry out, such as the assault on the social wage, increase. The shift to the left in bourgeois politics is not some long-term process. And it is yoked to growing class polarization, rising Bonapartism and increased adaptation to it, and increased dangers of war.

The conflicts and instability among European powers, as well as the conflicts between Washington and shifting alliances among the European powers, all will increase. Common commitment to the euro will not always be a stabilizing factor.

Political demagoguery in the leadership of the union movement, in the leadership of mass movements, will grow. We're just beginning to see this process. It puts a premium on competent tactics, on vanguard fighters learning to prevent foolish, impatient things from occurring; to avoid letting anger and not strategy be our guide; to avoid unnecessary victimization; to develop habits of discipline; to hold yourself accountable for the consequences to others of every action.

When leaders of the Socialist Workers Party went to prison at the beginning of the Second World War, they were sent up because they wouldn't subordinate the unions to the war. They wouldn't subordinate the battle for colo-

Continued on ISR 10

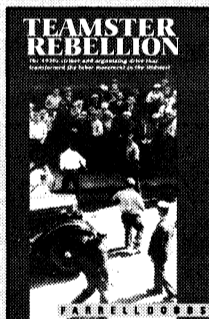
Lessons from the labor battles of the 1930s

by **Farrell Dobbs**

Four books on the 1930s strikes, organizing drives, and political campaigns that transformed the Teamsters union in Minnesota and much of the Midwest into a fighting industrial union movement. Indispensable tools for advancing revolutionary politics, organization, and effective trade unionism.

Teamster Rebellion

The 1934 strikes that built an industrial union and a fighting social movement in Minneapolis, recounted by a central leader of that battle. The first in a four-volume series on the Teamster-led strikes and organizing drives in the Midwest that helped pave the way for the CIO and pointed a road toward independent labor political action. \$16.95



Teamster Power

The growth and consolidation of the Teamsters union in Minneapolis and its class-struggle leadership, and the 11-state over-the-road organizing campaign that brought union power for the first time to much of the Midwest. \$17.95

Teamster Politics

How rank-and-file Teamsters led the fight against antiunion frame-ups and assaults by fascist goons; the battle for jobs for all; and efforts to advance independent labor political action. \$17.95

Teamster Bureaucracy

How the rank-and-file Teamsters leadership organized to oppose World War II, racism, and government efforts—backed by the international officialdom of the AFL, the CIO, and the Teamsters—to gag class-struggle-minded workers. \$18.95

The author, Farrell Dobbs, was the central organizer of these labor battles during the rise of the CIO, and subsequently national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party.

Related reading

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay by Leon Trotsky Featuring "Trade Unions: Their Past, Present, and Future" by Karl Marx

In this book, two central leaders of the modern communist workers movement outline the fight to transform the trade unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle. \$14.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 16.

Socialists hold convention in N.Y. area

Continued from ISR 5

ers had protested to the boss continued forced overtime on Saturday and 80-hour weeks. The boss kept promising one more Saturday would be it. Then the next Monday he announced forced overtime for the next nine Saturdays.

"A group of nine workers, all women, marched into the office and told him 'we're not animals, we need a life,' and that there shouldn't be any more Saturday work. That was the last Saturday we've worked since," she said.

Following this protest and other examples of militancy on the part of workers in the plant, Braiman put up signs in the break room advertising several Pathfinder books. Six workers purchased 16 books then, and six more later. One subscribed to the *Militant*. Braiman pointed out "how crucial it is to have a plant gate team outside each week to carry out political work. During the December assault on Iraq by Washington, the team was there handing out a statement from the *Militant*, which made a big difference in the discussions I was able to have on the job that day."

Building on the "initial progress we've made in the third campaign for the turn," Braiman said, "means getting more of us into meatpacking, garment shops, and working to get hired in coal mines."

Andy Buchanan, a textile worker in Paterson, New Jersey, and a member of UNITE said, "With only a few months in these industries, we are getting in touch with layers of workers we weren't in contact with, and with developments in industries we didn't know about."

In his report Britton described discussions held the previous day in the district fraction of socialists in the UFCW.

They reviewed a political misorientation in the union and undemocratic functioning in the fraction that threatened to undermine initial progress if not corrected.

Socialists orient to getting jobs in UFCW-organized beef and pork slaughter houses and processing plants. The socialists' concentration on factories in the red meat industry comes out of their participation in a series of struggles that broke out in the mid-1980s in the Midwest packing-houses, including the strike by packing house workers at Hormel in Austin, Minnesota.

In rebuilding the UFCW fraction in New York and Newark, the Newark branch of the party probed, then decided not to build a fraction at a plant that makes hors d'oeuvres. This decision was undemocratically reversed by the steering committee of the UFCW national fraction, after informal discussion with a couple of individuals, bypassing the Newark branch.

Prior the convention, district fraction members passed a number of motions — which were made available to the delegates — addressing these questions and reported they came out of the meetings with a stronger fraction.

A number of delegates spoke to the importance of concentrating their forces in the red meat kill, cut, and processing plants, as well as why reconquering party democracy and the responsibilities of leadership bodies goes hand-in-hand with the third campaign for the turn.

"We need to work collectively to meet the challenge of building this fraction in meatpacking, and not to bend to what might seem like an easier road," said Gerardo Sánchez, a volunteer in the print shop who had previously

been a meatpacker in Iowa. Dissipating the focus on the strategic red meat industry by building the fraction in food processing or other UFCW plants "would weaken, not strengthen the fraction," he said.

"We are building a combat organization of the working class," said one delegate newly hired at a packing plant. "This means we have to take ourselves and our decisions seriously and not accept less-than-adequate explanations for decisions we are also responsible for making."

Britton said that "we are building a disciplined party of professional revolutionaries, a cadre party. We are also building a party of thinking, self-acting cadre who take initiatives, reach out to struggles and work to advance the proletarian and democratic functioning of the party. We are building a cadre party and a party of cadres."

The progress in getting hired in UFCW and UNITE shops is a result of getting a regularly functioning jobs committee going in the branches. The branch in New York, for example, decided that the committee would meet four nights a week to discuss new experiences and what to do the following day. To qualify to be a members of the committee means spending at least some time one day a week going out and putting in applications, in addition to calling targeted plants. Centralizing the work was also crucial, delegates reported, to avoid unnecessary mistakes.

UFCW member Mike Galati explained how workers can get skills needed to keep jobs in the meatpacking industry and what the party is learning about the structure and struggles in the industry today. For example, where he works, "the boss says he has to keep wages low to compete with packing plants in the Midwest that hire workers from Mexico. But I know that workers there make substantially more than we do."

Members of the UNITE fraction recently hired into garment shops described the size and centrality of the garment industry in the region, and raised initial ideas of how party members can gain skills to hold down sewing jobs.

Another developing struggle discussed at the convention was that of workers at Continental Airlines to win union recognition. A weekly plant gate team of socialists at the Newark airport, one of the airline's hubs, sold 24 copies of the *Militant* to Continental workers in two weeks.

The party's work in defense of the Cuban revolution will be a priority of the district committee. New York is a center of activity for those who defend the revolution and oppose Washington's embargo and 40-year drive to topple the revolutionary government led by Fidel Castro.

Summing up the meeting Britton said the members of the party in the district "have begun the fight to catch up to vanguard workers in this country. What we have discussed is happening in the class struggle qualitatively changes the number of other fighters we can be working with and who will be interested in the party convention in April and active workers conference this summer."

Greg McCartan is a member of UNITE in Boston.

Sea change in working-class politics

Continued from ISR 9

nial freedom to the war. They wouldn't subordinate the struggle for Black rights to the war. They wouldn't support the imperialist aims of the war.

At Sandstone Federal Penitentiary in Minnesota, other inmates were trying to figure out why we were there, how we fit into the social hierarchy of the cons. A couple of fellow prisoners who were doing time for bank robbery (which was relatively high on the social scale at Sandstone) asked them, What are you in for? The SWP leaders explained by saying, Well, you see, they nabbed you for trying to take a bank at a time. Sometimes you can do that quickly, with a small group, and get away with it. But sooner or later you always end up in here, or dead. Our goal is not one bank at a time; our goal is to take the whole damn thing. And that can only be done by putting together a large group—disciplined, fighting working people who have learned patience, determination, strategy; who have worked together and had to figure out how to get there.

That's what we have to offer. We're organizing to take the whole damn thing. Working people can do this.

The capitalist rulers offer us social disaster. They offer us depression. They offer us death from curable disease. They offer us war. They offer us fascism. They offer us an unending list of horrors. But we offer ourselves the ability to prevent those horrors from becoming the final reality, the confidence that we can transform that future.

We are at the beginning of something that will bring deeper changes. But because we are at the beginning, we can make the mistake of not seeing it soon enough, of not radically changing the pace, character, understanding, and—above all—the timeliness with which we act today.

That, more than anything else, is what I want to put before you. That's what we have to fight for all the way to the SWP convention and beyond: to recognize that the changes that have already occurred require us to organize ourselves as the turn party we are, require us to bring the Young Socialists toward working-class struggles. Require us to recognize, as the resolution in issue no. 11 of *New International* says, that communist workers are above all a fraction of the working class—a simple mathematical fraction—and a fraction of the fighting vanguard of that class. Require us to see the communist party as the leading organized fighters of the class, that generalizes the experiences of past struggles that can lead to victory—that "point[s] out and bring[s] to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality," as the Communist Manifesto explains, and that in comparison to the majority of the working class has "the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the

conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement."¹⁹

This is possible. This is what we concentrate all our energies on. This is what the third campaign for the turn aims to accomplish. This is why we say to groups of fighting workers who have reached a certain stage of discussion, confidence, and generalization of their experiences—join the Socialist Workers Party. We want to work with you, with an eye to fusing with your forces so we all have a stronger organization.

Along this course we offer every Young Socialists member a chance to be an absolutely unique and irreplaceable part of proletarian action. And we will attempt to recruit every one of you who is not in the Socialist Workers Party to the party, as we work to recruit every worker who is fighting to our party as well.

That is the road to San Francisco. It is up to you to decide whether the course is justified, the goal worthy of the effort. If so, we ask you to join us in making it happen.

¹⁹ *The Communist Manifesto*, pp. 35–36.

— IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP —

Where to find Pathfinder books and distributors of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, *New International*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, *Nueva Internacional* and *Ny International*.

UNITED STATES

ALABAMA: Birmingham: 111 21st St. South Zip 35233. Tel: (205) 323-3079. Compuserve: 73712,3561

CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles: 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Zip: 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460. Compuserve: 74642,326 **San Francisco:** 3284 23rd St. Zip: 94110. Tel: (415) 282-6255, 285-5323. Compuserve: 75604,556

FLORIDA: Miami: 137 N.E. 54th St. Zip: 33137. Tel: (305) 756-1020. Compuserve: 103171,1674

GEORGIA: Atlanta: 230 Auburn Ave. N.E. Zip: 30303. Tel: (404) 577-7976. Compuserve: 104226,1245

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. Zip: 60622. Tel: (773) 342-1780. Compuserve: 104077,511

IOWA: Des Moines: 2724 Douglas Ave. Zip: 50310. Tel: (515) 277-4600. Compuserve: 104107,1412

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 780 Tremont St. Zip: 02118. Tel: (617) 247-6772. Compuserve: 103426,3430

MICHIGAN: Detroit: 7414 Woodward Ave. Zip: 48202. Compuserve: 104127,3505 Tel: (313) 875-0100.

MINNESOTA: St. Paul: 2490 University Ave. W., St. Paul. Zip: 55114. Tel: (651) 644-6325. Compuserve: 103014,3261

NEW JERSEY: Newark: 87A Halsey.

Mailing address: Riverfront Plaza, P.O. Box 200117. Zip: 07102-0302. Tel: (973) 643-3341. Compuserve: 104216,2703

NEW YORK: New York City: 59 4th Avenue (corner of Bergen) Brooklyn, NY Zip: 11217. Tel: (718) 399-7257. Compuserve: 102064,2642 ; 167 Charles St., Manhattan, NY. Zip: 10014. Tel: (212) 366-1973.

OHIO: Cincinnati: P.O. Box 19300. Zip: 45219. Tel: (513) 662-1931. **Cleveland:** 1832 Euclid. Zip: 44115. Tel: (216) 861-6150. Compuserve: 103253,1111

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 1906 South St. Zip: 19146. Tel: (215) 546-8218. Compuserve: 104502,1757 **Pittsburgh:** 1103 E. Carson St. Zip 15203. Tel: (412) 381-9785. Compuserve: 103122,720

TEXAS: Houston: 6969 Gulf Freeway, Suite 380. Zip: 77087. Tel: (713) 847-0704. Compuserve: 102527,2271

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 1930 18th St. N.W. Suite #3 (Entrance on Florida Ave.) Zip: 20009. Tel: (202) 387-2185. Compuserve: 75407,3345.

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 1405 E. Madison. Zip: 98122. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Compuserve: 74461,2544.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 176 Redfern St., Redfern NSW 2016. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879, Haymarket Post Office, NSW 1240. Tel: 02-9690-1533. Compuserve: 106450,2216

BRITAIN

London: 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL. Tel: 0171-928-7993. Compuserve:

101515,2702

Manchester: Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Postal code: M4 4AA. Tel: 0161-839-1766. Compuserve: 106462,327

CANADA

Montreal: 4581 Saint-Denis. Postal code: H2J 2L4. Tel: (514) 284-7369. Compuserve: 104614,2606

Toronto: 851 Bloor St. West. Postal code: M6G 1M3. Tel: (416) 533-4324. Compuserve: 103474,13

Vancouver: 3967 Main St. Postal code: V5V 3P3. Tel: (604) 872-8343. Compuserve: 103430,1552

FRANCE

Paris: Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 47-26-58-21. Compuserve: 73504,442

ICELAND

Reykjavik: Klapparstíg 26. Mailing address: P. Box 0233, IS 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 5502. INTERNET: milpth@mmedia.is

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 379-3075. Compuserve: 100035,3205

Christchurch: 199 High St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055. Compuserve: 100250,1511

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. Compuserve: 100416,2362

That's why the fees go up — On average, doctors listen to patient's concerns for about 23 sec-



Harry
Ring

onds before interrupting them with question, according to a report in the *Journal of American Medicine*.

That's about five seconds better than earlier studies.

March of civilization — "Troublemakers" at England's new jail for youth 12 to 15 will be dealt with by a "tornado team" armed with clubs. To "defend" themselves, the squad is authorized to pin youth to the floor, hold them in arm locks and use clubs on them. The jail has a capacity of 40 and currently house 30 apparently ferocious youngsters.

The global village — Patrick Bell of the American Ass'n for the

Advancement of Science, estimates that a third to a half the world's population have never spoken on a telephone.

Risky profession — "Last year 19 newspaper reporters were killed in the line of duty. In its annual report, the reporters' organization, Journalists Without Borders found that the most deadly assignment was not, however, covering wars and crises, but rather reporting on 'corruption or connections between government authorities and criminal organizations.'" — *Sudeutsche*

Zeitung, Germany.

Fixing Medicare — "A plan to revamp health care for senior citizens, raising the age of eligibility for Medicare and increasing costs for many, began moving through a bipartisan Congressional committee Tuesday." — News item.

It just occurred to them? — The chemical industry is financing a six-year "independent" study on how chemicals affect health and safety. It will also check out the toxicity of 3,000 widely used chemi-

cals.

Generous — Ferrari, the sports car with a sticker price of about \$240,000, is doing a recall because of a faulty pipe fitting that can cause a fire. The company assures the repairs will be made free.

Take that, sir [cur?!] — In London a cop in a crime prevention program for the elderly, was convicted of stealing £700 from the life savings of a disabled woman in her 80s. A two-fisted judge meted out a sentence of nine months.

Cyprus meeting plans for world youth festival

Continued from Page 6

the Socialist Youth League of Japan.

Yonezawa said it's fine to support reunification of the Korean peninsula and oppose any military threats against the DPRK. "But that trip simply served to prettify north Korea. People got only to see and hear the side of the north Korean government. There is also south Korea, and WFDY cannot side politically with the north Korean regime."

Most delegates did not share this view.

Li Il Hwan, first secretary of the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League, described the recent escalation of attacks by Japanese and U.S. imperialism against the DPRK, Washington's responsibility in killing millions during the 1950-53 Korean War and maintaining the division of the Korean peninsula ever since, and how the government in the DPRK has taken the moral high ground on the question of reunification.

Among the most effective in answering Yonezawa was Ju Sang Cho of the Korean Youth League of Japan. He described how millions of Koreans were forcibly taken into Japan, including hundreds of thousands of women who were forced into sex slavery by the Japanese army. "To this day, the 700,000 Koreans living in Japan face extreme discrimination," he said. "The victory of the Korean people first against Japanese colonialism and then against U.S. imperialism in the Korean War was a major gain for working people around the world. Let's keep these facts in mind when speaking about the DPRK and Japan."

Argiris Malapanis, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States who was part of the Young Socialists delegation, said taking a "neutral" position on the north-south Korea division is unacceptable for any organization that claims to be anti-imperialist. He pointed to the January 19 State of the Union speech where U.S. president William Clinton announced the largest increase in the U.S. military budget in 15 years and his intention to end the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty with Russia and implement some form of the "Star Wars" antiballistic missile

program, giving first-strike nuclear capacity to Washington — all justified in the name of combating "rogue states" and "terrorists." The top "rogue state" on Clinton's list was the DPRK. And the target is not only north Korea but China, Malapanis said.

Malapanis also pointed to the steps to create a North American command of the U.S. Armed Forces. So defense of the DPRK against attacks by U.S. and Japanese imperialism, and telling the truth about Korea, cannot be separated from advancing the interests of working people at home. "WFDY should not only be commended for organizing the fact-finding mission, but urged to organize other such initiatives."

Yonezawa's objection was not backed by any other delegate and was not sustained.

Workshop discussion

Political discussion continued during workshops and regional meetings at the General Assembly, which elaborated proposals for common action. One issue that was hotly contested was whether to support a woman's right to choose abortion. A majority among the delegates from Asia proposed deleting a statement from the main political declaration that called for "access to child care and full sexual and reproductive rights for women."

During the final plenary, Margarida Botelho of the Communist Youth of Portugal objected to that proposal as did several other delegates. Ryan Kelly of the YS in the United States said that it's the duty of anti-imperialist fighters to try to win working people who may be opposed to abortion to support a woman's right to control her own body.

The disputed statement on women's rights remained in the declaration adopted.

The resolutions adopted by the General Assembly included proposals for stepping up support to the Palestinian struggle for a homeland, the fight by the Sahrawi people for independence from Morocco, and the independence struggle in East Timor. They also called for supporting the campaign to free the 16 Puerto Rican political prisoners in the United States, stop the execution of Pennsylvania

death-row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal, and back the independence struggles in Quebec and Northern Ireland.

At the end of the gathering, the assembly elected a new General Council, which subsequently picked new officers. The Communist Youth of Greece was elected in WFDY's presidency and the All India Youth Federation retained the post of general secretary. The UJC of Cuba continues to hold one of the eight vice-presidencies.

Next world youth festival

The last day of the event focused on discussion of the next world youth festival.

In addition to a number of those who took part in WFDY's General Assembly, another six groups sent representatives to the February 1 meeting on the festival. Those are the social democratic youth of Austria, which led a sizable delegation from that country to the 14th youth festival in Cuba, Young Socialists of Sweden, Marxist Leninist Movement/Rebel of Belgium, Young Socialists of Canada, East Africa Youth Council of Uganda, and Pan African Movement based in Uganda.

At a similar meeting in Cairo in March of last year, three proposals had been presented on where to hold the next youth festival: Namibia, Nepal, and Russia.

Valeri Azestov of the youth section of the Russian Communist Party attended WFDY's General Assembly but did not stay for the meeting on the festival. He left a letter asking for support to the proposal he made earlier to hold the festival in Moscow, but no delegate spoke in favor.

The representatives of the Democratic Youth Federation (DNYF) of Nepal had proposed at the Cairo meeting holding the next festival in Katmandu, Nepal. The Communist Party in Nepal had just won parliamentary elections with a large majority. This time, however, it was reported that the Communist Party as well as the DNYF had undergone a major split and new elections, which are scheduled for May. A couple of these delegates said the situation

in Nepal is now too unstable and the competing groups do not collaborate very well. While the Nepal proposal remained on the table, its supporters did not argue for it.

"Holding the festival in Africa, and especially Namibia, can be a political symbol and pole of attraction for young people," said Rodríguez of the UJC of Cuba. He pointed to the successful national liberation struggle in that country and its interlinking with the defeat of the apartheid regime in South Africa. None of the previous festivals have been held on the African continent.

A few other delegates pointed to the role of Cuban volunteers in Angola — fighting alongside the Angolan army and fighters from SWAPO — in defeating successive invasions of that country by the armies of the racist regime in South Africa.

Rodríguez pledged the UJC's support and offered the experience from hosting the previous festival in Cuba to help organize the next such gathering in Namibia. He and several other delegates said that the principles of nonexclusion and of self-financing that were at the center of the success of the festival in Cuba must guide the efforts for the 15th festival.

The overwhelming majority of delegates at the February 1 meeting spoke in favor of holding the gathering in Namibia.

Maleachi Ilunga of the SWAPO Youth League said that his organization and the government are discussing how to come up with resources to host the festival and need three more months for consultations. Delegates from Benin, Senegal, and Morocco offered their countries as possible sites if the Namibia option does not materialize, to ensure that the next festival be held in Africa.

The meeting decided to send a letter on behalf of the groups present to all responsible organizations and institutions in Namibia expressing the support from youth groups around the world for holding the festival there. WFDY will also initiate an international delegation to Namibia to discuss plans for the festival. A final decision on the site is to be made within six months.

CALENDAR

MARYLAND

Baltimore

Rally to Commemorate the Third Anniversary of the Crown Central Petroleum Lockout in Pasadena, Texas. Thurs., Feb. 11, 4:30 p.m. *The Blaustein Building, 1 N. Charles St., Crown Central Headquarters.* For more information, call (410) 837-7906. E-mail: erothste@bcpl.net

MINNESOTA

Browerville

The Battle of the Black Farmers Against Discrimination. Gary Grant, President Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA), will speak on the class action lawsuit against the USDA for racial discrimination. Sponsored by Central Minnesota COACT and Whole Farm Cooperative. Wed., Feb. 10, 12 Noon, potluck lunch. Program 1 p.m. *Browerville Community Center in City Hall.*

Northfield

Gary Grant will speak Thurs., Feb. 11, 8 p.m. at *Carleton College Chapel, East First Street.* Sponsored by Carleton College Black Student Association, Director of Multi-Cultural Affairs and Coordinator of Multi-Cultural Issues.

Montevideo

Gary Grant will speak. Fri., Feb. 12, 7:30 p.m. at *Sabathani Community Center, 310 East 38th Street.*

Watson

Sat., Feb. 13, 12 noon, potluck lunch. Program 1 p.m. *Watson Lutheran Church, 195 Church Street, 3 miles northwest of Montevideo on Hwy 759.*

NEW YORK

New York

The South Armagh Farmers & Residents Committee is touring the United States! Meet: Toni Carragher and Maria Caraher — Representatives of South Armagh Farmers and Residents Committee who will discuss the struggle of toilers in South Armagh, Northern Ireland — the most heavily militarized area in Western Europe. Fri., Feb. 12, 7:00 p.m. *The Breffni 40th St. and Queens Blvd. (Woodside) Sat., Feb. 13, 7:00 p.m. Rory Dolans 890 McLean Ave. (Yonkers) Donation for each event: \$10.*

NEW JERSEY

Newark

The South Armagh Farmers & Residents Committee is touring the United States! Meet: Toni Carragher and Maria Caraher — Representatives of South Armagh Farmers and Residents Committee. Fri., Feb. 12, 7:00 p.m. Sun., Feb. 14, 12:00 p.m. *Davey's Locker (brunch) 5 Park Ave. (Montdale)*

For more information about other U.S. tour stops call Irish Northern Aid: (212) 736-1916.

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte

Rally for United Steelworkers on Strike against Continental General Tire. Sun., Feb. 14, 10 a.m. at the *Continental General Tire plant off Westinghouse Blvd.* Sponsored by Union Cities, a union coalition in North and South Carolina. For more information, call (803) 548-7272, (704) 333-2060.

ALABAMA

Birmingham

Unionists and Farmers Resistance in the South. Panel discussion. Speakers: David Howard, president, Mileston Co-op, Tchula, Mississippi; Eddie Carthan, president, Mississippi Family Farmers; Joann Hogan, Catfish Workers of America, fighting mass firing at Freshwater Farms in Belzoni, Mississippi; Tony Sanders, UAW local 1832, was on strike at Peterbilt in Nashville, Tennessee; Susan Lamont, Socialist Workers Party, USWA Local 2122. Sat., Feb. 13, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. *111 21st St. South. Donation: \$4. Dinner: \$5. Tel: (205) 323-3079.*

GEORGIA

Atlanta

Why I'm Running for Congress in the 6th Congressional District: For a Workers and Farmers Government. Speakers: Paul Cornish, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress 6th C.D. Sat., Feb. 13, 7:30 p.m. *230 Auburn Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (404) 577-7976.*

MIAMI

Florida

The Legacy of Malcolm X. Fri., Feb. 12, 7:30 p.m.

The Rise and Fall of Radical Reconstruction. Fri., Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. Donation: \$6.

Miles of Smiles. Years of Struggles. Video showing on the history of the sleeping car porters union and a discussion on the role of Black

workers in the labor movement. Fri., Feb. 26, 7:30 p.m.

All events to be held at 137 N.E. 54th Street. Donation: \$4. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

OHIO

Cleveland

Malcolm X Today. Video and discussion. Fri., Feb. 12, 7:30 p.m. *1832 Euclid Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (216) 861-6150.*

BRITAIN

London

Celebrate the publication of 'Che Guevara and the Imperialist Reality.' Fri., Feb. 12, 7 p.m. 47, *The Cut (tube Waterloo). Donation: £2. Tel: 0171 401 2409.*

Manchester

The Truth Must Be Told: Eyewitness Account from 1999 Demonstration in Derry. Fri., Feb. 12, 7 p.m. *Upstairs at 60 Shudehill. Donation: £2. Tel: 0161-839-1766.*

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

The Struggle for Maori Rights Today. Speaker: Felicity Coggan, Communist League. Fri., Feb., 12 p.m. *203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel (9) 379-3075.*

Christchurch

Oppose "Anti-Crime" Campaign. Speaker: Joan Shields, Communist League. Fri. Feb. 19, *199 High St. Tel: (3) 365 6055.*

Program to confront farm crisis

“Too much food!” “Too many farmers!” This is the litany ritually offered up in the big-business press to rationalize one of the bitter consequences of the deepening crisis of the capitalist system — depriving tens of millions of farmers worldwide of the land they need to produce food and fiber to make a living for their families.

The conditions forcing more and more farmers off the land have been worsening as the capitalist economic crisis intensifies. A resolution adopted by the Socialist Workers Party more than 10 years ago and reprinted in *New International* No. 10 (“What the 1987 stock market crash foretold”), described several consequences of the steady decline in the profit rate of the capitalist exploiters. One was the farm crisis in the imperialist countries; another overproduction and excess capacity.

There’s no doubt that these conditions have become more pronounced. From Japan to France and Greece to Canada, conditions are becoming more difficult. In the past decade more than 1 million farmers in Japan have been squeezed out — about 25 percent of the country’s farm households. In the United Kingdom farm incomes are at their lowest level since the 1930s. Farm income in Denmark plummeted by half last year.

Hog farmers have been particularly hard hit. A international “glut” of hogs is blamed for this situation. But this only underscores the irrationality of a system that claims overproduction of food when millions of people throughout the world are suffering from hunger and malnourishment. Most other agricultural prices have fallen too, including those that wheat, beef, and dairy farmers receive.

The mounting difficulties farmers face are very similar from one part of the world to another. Exploited producers on the land in France and Germany protesting their conditions have more in common with farmers in the United States and Canada, despite differences in language, traditions, and history, than they do with the owners of the packing houses, processing plants, canneries, and shipping companies in their own countries.

The true common language of farmers is the widening gap between their costs of production and the price they get for their commodities; increasing difficulty in getting loans; high interest on mortgages; exorbitant rent; and taxes. They are debt slaves — always owing and no prospect of ever being clear until they’ve been wrung dry by big business and banks, and their farms foreclosed on.

The common language of their exploiters is the relentless drive for profits. The owners of Hormel, IBP, Cargill, Land O’Lakes, and their counterparts in Europe are mak-

ing record profits. As hog farmers face one of the worst disasters ever, Hormel reaped a record \$139.3 million last year and IBP profits rose 62 percent to \$190 million.

Those farmers operating on the smallest margin, or no margin at all, are the ones least able to get relief. Particularly hard hit are farmers who are Black. The fight these farmers have been waging in conjunction with federal lawsuits against the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s racist practices is an inspiring example to all farmers and is helping give impetus to the struggle of farmers throughout the country. It is also helping to give a boost to the fight against racial inequality and for the rights of Blacks.

The leaders of the fight against the USDA have not only been reaching out for support from farmers across the country but also are attempting to win support from fighters in the labor movement. Farmers everywhere eagerly attempt to establish links with workers. Farmers who offered hogs to striking workers at Titan Tire in Des Moines got support from the strikers when they called a protest.

To help forge an alliance with exploited producers on the land, the labor movement must fight to defend farmers from the ravages of an economic system in crisis. We can offer the following demands as the basis for a pact:

- A moratorium on all bank foreclosures on farms;
- A guaranteed market for farmers’ crops and livestock with prices adequate to meet production costs and provide a decent living;
- Cheap credit to working farmers who need it with special preference to those most in need. No discrimination against Black, Chicano, or Asian farmers;
- Guaranteed government-funded crop and livestock insurance with 100 percent protection against floods, drought, hailstorms, and other natural disasters;
- End to property taxes and a sharply graduated income tax that places the burden on the rich rather than workers and working farmers.
- Create committees of workers and farmers chosen by unions, farm organizations, and consumer groups to police the prices and profits of supermarkets and agribusiness. This can help counter attempts to use commodity prices to divide workers and farmers and expose their profiteering in rigged low prices to farmers, and high supermarket prices.

This program of action can help weld workers and farmers into a struggle for protection and at the same time point the road forward to developing a revolutionary movement capable of overturning big-business rule and establishing a government of workers and farmers.

NATO plans Kosova occupation

Continued from front page

the Contact Group unless it supported a NATO order authorizing military action.

Washington has seized on the Yugoslav regime’s assault on the Kosova independence struggle to press a campaign for military intervention. The Clinton administration, which opposes independence, is reportedly weighing plans to send some 7,000 GIs for the “peacekeeping” operation in Kosova. The NATO military arsenal is poised for bombing raids with 400 warplanes.

Other participants in the planned intervention include London, Paris, Bonn, and future NATO candidates Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. Under a scheme devised by NATO last October, Kosova would be divided into four sectors with U.S., French, and British forces controlling three of them. British general Michael Jackson would command an occupying army some 30,000 troops, including up to 8,000 British soldiers, 6,000 from France, and 3,000 from Germany. The governments of the Netherlands, Russia, and the Nordic countries would send 1,000 soldiers each.

“The major powers are trying to do another Dayton,” opined the *Financial Times* February 1. After leading a sustained NATO bombardment of Serbian forces in Yugoslavia, the Clinton administration brought representatives of the Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian forces to a U.S. military base in Dayton, Ohio, for talks that authorized Washington to lead an occupation army in Bosnia of 60,000 NATO troops. Today the region remains partitioned and occupied by a NATO force of 30,000 soldiers. As in Bosnia, the aim of the U.S. rulers’ intervention in Kosova is to prepare to use force to reestablish capitalist property relations throughout Yugoslavia. These moves are part of the tightening of imperialism’s military noose around Russia.

Washington’s latest “peace plan” is a 40-page draft that would remove Belgrade as the governing authority in Kosova and virtually set up the province as an imperialist protectorate. Kosova’s status is to be decided after a period of three years. The proposal also calls for the Kosova Liberation Army (UCK), who are waging an armed struggle for independence, to disarm within three months.

The document would establish an “international monitoring mission” whose chief would have the power to appoint and dismiss officials in the administration and judicial system. The “mission” would supervise elections in Kosova and set up its own broadcasting system.

While its junior imperial partner London has stepped

forward to lead the negotiations and the military intervention, Washington is sinking its roots deeper into the Balkans powder keg. Imperialist troops face the possibility of military confrontations with Serbian military forces and the UCK. At a January 28 meeting the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff warned about U.S. casualties as they approved the move to send ground troops.

Ibrahim Rugova, leader of the League for a Democratic Kosova and elected as president in March polls, which were boycotted by other Albanian parties and the UCK, said he will take part in the February 6 meeting in France.

UCK spokesman Jakup Krasniqi announced February 2 that representatives of the group will attend as well. “We have some objections to the proposed document but we are certainly ready to go,” Krasniqi said in a statement.

Other UCK fighters have balked. “There is no point in going to talks with guns pointed at our foreheads,” said Pleurat Sejdiu, a UCK representative in London.

“We are not asked to go to France to talk peace but to capitulate,” declared UCK political representative Adem Demaci at February 2 news conference in Pristina, the capital of Kosova. UCK leader Sokol Bahsota expressed willingness to accept NATO “peacekeeping” troops in Kosova, but stated, “We will not give up our weapons until we have our independence.”

Yugoslav deputy premier Vuk Draskovic said that he believed Belgrade would attend. Serbian deputy premier Vojislav Seselj said that he is against participating in the meeting, “despite the threats” from NATO. Seselj’s Serbian Radical Party issued a statement saying that “only the complete destruction of the Albanian terrorist gangs, which have the complete support of their American mentors, will solve Kosova’s crisis.”

The same day the “peace plan” was presented by the Contact Group, 24 Albanians were killed in the village of Rogova, including three people in UCK uniforms. A Serb policeman had been killed there earlier. Several small bomb attacks took place over the first week of February in Pristina, against Serb as well as Albanian-frequented cafes.

Albanians make up 90 percent of the 2 million people in Kosova, a province in the southern region of Yugoslavia. They face discrimination and the province’s autonomy was revoked by the Milosevic in 1989. Most Albanians in Kosova favor independence from Yugoslavia.

Natasha Terlexis and Bobbis Misailides from Athens, Greece, contributed to this article.

On ‘skilled’ and ‘unskilled’ wages

BY MIKE ITALIE

In the January 25 *Militant*, Arlene Rubinstein and Ernie Mailhot answered questions from readers Edwin Fruit and Larry Johnston about whether or not to describe the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) as a union. I want to address some of Johnston’s other questions.

He asks, “Why have you not taken up the issue of the true interests of the skilled workers? What is a reasonable difference between skilled and unskilled wages?” In a follow-up letter printed last week, he adds, “More explanation of why the interests of skilled and unskilled workers are the same and how the value of labor power is determined would be useful.”

DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

AMFA presents itself as the defender of “skilled” workers, as a separate “craft,” whose members are mistreated by industrial unions that include all workers in a company or industry. In its biggest victory in 40 years, of which there have been few, AMFA defeated the International Association of Machinists (IAM) in a November 20 representation vote among Northwest Airlines mechanics and cleaners. At the Atlanta maintenance base hardly a week goes by without the posting of a newspaper clipping pointing to a high demand for aircraft mechanics. Some AMFA supporters argue that mechanics should split off from other workers to take advantage of a seeming increase in bargaining power, saying, “I look at things as a mechanic. We should negotiate separately for what we’re worth.”

But this narrow craft approach is a deadly trap that leads workers into making deals with the bosses for short-term gains at the expense of the labor movement as a whole.

The wages system

Johnston rightly asks, “How can you address the issue of the unity of the skilled and unskilled without taking up the issue of the wages system itself?” Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, the founders of the modern communist movement, analyzed the source of wages. In *The Wages System*, Engels explained that workers are not paid the value of what they produce. Instead, the capitalists pay a wage based solely on what will physically maintain the workers and their class. As Engels says, the wage is “the sum required to produce to the laborer the means of existence necessary, according to the standard of life of his station and country, to keep himself in working order and to propagate his race.”

In exchange, the employer purchases our labor power, with which we create products worth many times more than what we receive in wages. This is why the bosses speed up production and drive to increase the length of the working day (regardless of the miserly overtime premium we sometimes receive) — the capitalists’ profits soar when they are able to grind more work out of us, and yet continue to pay only what we need to survive.

Marx and Engels also analyzed the reasons for the differences in wages workers receive, and concluded that these have very little to do with factors such as the amount of training required for a job. In volume 1 of *Capital*, Marx points out that as the production process becomes more mechanized and less specialized, “The distinction between higher and simple labor, between ‘skilled labor’ and ‘unskilled labor,’ rests in part on pure illusion or, to say the least, on distinctions that have long since ceased to be real, and survive only by virtue of a traditional convention; and in part on the helpless condition of some sections of the working class, a condition that prevents exacting equally with the rest the value of their labor-power.”

Noneconomic factors play a predominant role in pitting workers against each other and determining sometimes sharp distinctions in wages — physical differences (age, race or sex), sheer prejudice (national origin), or social power (union vs. nonunion). For example, in spite of the high level of skill and experience involved in sewing garments, the fact that most workers in this industry are women and immigrants is used by the bosses to drive down the value of their labor power. They are among the lowest-paid workers in the United States, with some of the worst job conditions. In contrast, workers at the Northwest maintenance base in Atlanta who sew seat covers receive wages three or four times higher than those of most garment workers, though their skills are no greater.

Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin explained that a craft mentality was characteristic of an “aristocracy of labor,” which had become the base for the bureaucracy in the unions and a source of opportunism in the socialist movement. Their conception of “we” vs. “them” was one that allied better-paid workers with the bosses in opposition to the vast majority of workers and farmers, at home and in the semicolonial world. The challenge for workers and farmers today is to understand that “we” includes all workers regardless of the work we perform or the country we live in, and excludes all bosses, bankers, and landlords who make up the ruling capitalist classes. In this way we can fight for the vast majority who produce the wealth against the tiny minority who steal it.

Mike Italie is a member of the IAM, soon to be in AMFA.

Steelworkers in W. Virginia fight for pensions

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a

stocked food pantry that supplies groceries for strikers and their families. A barber shop was set up with free haircuts donated by a supporter on the day that we visited. The kitchen and pantry are organized by the Women's Support Group and

ON THE PICKET LINE

way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

HUNTINGTON, West Virginia — The 840 members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 40 are on strike against Inco Alloys, an alloy steel producer here. The strike began December 12. "We want to guarantee our people's pension and job security," Local 40 vice president Randy Moore told the *Militant*. Currently, workers receive a pension of \$33 a month per year of service, plus a \$22 a month supplement for workers who retire before they are eligible for Social Security benefits. The company refuses to put this in the contract, Moore said.

The company also refuses to guarantee union recognition if the plant is sold. In October, Inco was bought out by Special Metals Corp., and many workers suspect the plant may be sold again. Contracting-out of jobs is another dispute.

The walkout at Inco is the latest in a series of labor battles in this part of the Ohio River valley, including the just-victorious strike at MSI in Marietta, Ohio, and the ongoing strike at Monarch Rubber in Spencer, West Virginia. The strikers at Inco have linked up with these fighters, including unionists from Ravenswood, West Virginia, where steelworkers won a fight to defend their union in 1990-92 against Ravenswood Aluminum Corp.

"We're one of the biggest unions in the area," said Local 40 recording secretary Rick Jordan. "If they snooker us, where will it end?" He pointed to the upcoming contract at Steel of West Virginia, a Huntington mini-mill, and reported that Local 40 has made its strike headquarters available to unionists there. Other contracts in the area are also coming up this spring, including at Ravenswood.

The strike headquarters is a center of activity, with a kitchen serving hot meals for pickets and a well-

stocked by contributions from area merchants, unions, and workers said activist Misty Adkins.

The Women's Support Group is patterned on the Ravenswood Women's Support Group, which is still active backing workers struggles in the area. Other union committees organize everything from firewood for the picket shacks, to contact with the police, to reaching out to the community.

USWA Local 40 can be reached at: (304) 525-3611; or write to: 712-716 Buffington Street, Huntington, WV 25702.

Striking bus drivers get contract in Ontario

HAMILTON, Ontario — After a three-month strike against Hamilton Streetcar Railway (HSR), bus drivers and maintenance workers voted overwhelmingly to go back to work here on January 19. They are members of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 107.

With the new contract, the company will now contribute dollar for dollar the equivalent of the union's contributions to the pension fund. Before, HSR had refused to make any contribution. Another major issue of contracting out routes was dropped from the final agreement. The employers only withdrew the demand of contracting out an hour before union members met to vote on the contract. Workers will also receive a 4 percent wage increase over three years. The contract was approved with 87 percent in favor.

Under the new contract, "new hires will be guaranteed a run-time of 70 hours minimum over a two week period. For the older drivers it will remain at 80 hours guaranteed," said Biswas Ramessur, an ATU mechanic. The contract also introduces a graduated wage scale for new hires. Ramessur saw the outcome as a victory.

During the strike, ATU members organized a rally at city hall in November and successfully preventing an Internet cafe owner from organizing private transit service for customers. The strikers also received support from the Toronto bus drivers. "We are very grateful for the solidarity from Toronto's ATU

Hundreds rally for Ontario hotel workers



Militant/John Sarge

Hundreds of trade unionists and others marched in Chatham, Ontario, January 23 to support striking hotel workers fighting for their first contract with the Best Western Wheels Inn.

Local 113," declared striker Dave Mercer. Local 113 donated enough money to the strikers so that they could each receive \$20 more on their strike pay every week. The Toronto Transit Commission workers' own contract will expire in March 1999.

Calvin Klein warehouse workers fight shutdown

NEW BEDFORD, Massachusetts — "I don't care if we win or lose, but they are not leaving quietly," declared Julie Mello, a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial Textile and Employees (UNITE) and a worker at Calvin Klein Jeans. She was coming out of her union meeting on January 20, where they discussed the announcement of the closing of the plant.

At work on January 5, all employees received a letter from the Chief Operating Officer at Warnaco Group, the parent company of Calvin Klein, telling them the plant would be closed. Some 230 people work at the plant and most are in the union. Since Warnaco bought Calvin Klein two years ago they have closed facilities around the country and moved them to a non-union facility in New Jersey.

A week before the union meeting UNITE initiated an "Open letter to Linda Wachner, the Warnaco Corporation and Calvin Klein Jeanswear," and asked people to sign it. More than 2,000 people signed the "Open letter" by the time

of the union meeting. Mello described how she stood in front of a store for an hour and a half and collected nearly 350 signatures.

The letter ends, "Your decision is motivated by little more than greed. It is corporate America at its worst. We will stand with our neighbors in their fight to save their jobs."

The day the union meeting took place a local radio talk show host said workers at Calvin Klein Jeans should offer to work for \$5 an hour to keep the plant in New Bedford. At the union meeting, workers reported the union announced a bus would be going to New York the next day to meet with representatives from Warnaco.

Rhode Island hospital workers return to work

PROVIDENCE, Rhode Island — At 7:00 a.m. January 20, over 200 members of New England Health Care Employees Union, District 1199, walked back into Women's and Infants Hospital together. They had been locked out since December 23, the day after the 1,100 members of the union staged a one-day walkout in support of their negotiating committee. Their contract expired at the end of November.

The union's position is the old contract is in effect while they continue to negotiate a new one. The *Providence Journal* that morning reported the hospital has said contract changes they were seeking, including a wage freeze, would apply

to the returning workers.

Cheryl Ross, a member of the negotiating committee who has worked at the hospital over 30 years said, "We have a contract. We don't work under proposals. The only reason we are going back in is to take care of our patients."

In a letter passed out to the members of the union as they prepared to walk back in, local vice president Stan Israel and Barbara Cotta, a union organizer, pointed to the hospital's "unilateral changes in our working conditions and...discriminating against some of our leaders." The letter concluded, "Unfortunately, we will probably have to use our right to strike in the near future."

A dozen workers who were not scheduled to work that morning came out to be with their co-workers as they walked back in. Among them was Ann Marie DeVidio, a nurse who has worked six years at the hospital. When asked what she thought the union had gained so far in the fight against the hospital she explained, "We're more unified. We got to know people from other departments, other shifts. We could hear what was happening in the other areas."

Matthew Herreshoff, a member of the United Transportation Union in Cleveland; Vicky Mercier, a member of Canadian Auto Workers Local 1285 in Toronto; and Ted Leonard, a member of UNITE Local 311 in Boston, contributed to this column.

LETTERS

Disagree on impeachment

You've lost me now with this impeachment nonsense. I swear that the *Militant* denounced the whole "pornographication of bourgeois politics" and explained that working people should not fall into the trap of thinking that we should take a position or invest any energy whatsoever in what I still believe is a palace squabble.

In the January 18 issue, the editorial pronounces that "working people should oppose the attempt by rightist politicians to unseat [Clinton]...." Since when does the *Militant* uncritically repeat the political line of the Clintons themselves? Since when does it think there is any substantial difference between the wings of the ruling party?

Buchanan wants working people to vilify Clinton's morals, but how is taking a position supporting Clinton against such attacks helpful to the working class? Why should we care what happens to Clinton and liberalism?

Most people to whom I talk believe that the U.S. ruling party (both wings) does not represent their interests and that this latest "scandal" is not surprising. But to move from general feelings of disgust, amusement, and powerlessness to an understanding that people like Buchanan are using Clinton's mistakes as cover for rolling back our rights and that we need our own labor party is a huge leap of faith.

Ian Harvey
Naples, Florida

Crisis for farmers, workers

A recent "Commentary" column by the editors of *Business Week* appeared in the magazine's international edition and was reprinted as an advertisement on the op-ed page of the January 23 *New York Times*. Titled, "Latin America: The Fire Next Time?" the editors write, "...the larger reasons for failed IMF policies in Brazil are these: We live in a deflationary world — defined by overcapacity and insufficient

demand.... If local and global demand had been large enough to consume the output of Asia's factories back in 1997, trade deficits would not have been developed, debts would have been paid and currencies would not have come under pressure."

These defenders of capitalism use the word "demand" in a particular way. As an example one might cite the terrible food shortages for working people in Indonesia (to name just one country).

Meanwhile grain elevators across the United States are full and getting fuller. Rail workers like myself can testify that grain shipments by rail for export to Asia from the Port of Seattle have dried up over the last year or more. The explanation is not lack of "demand." Rather, it is the profit system that will only satisfy that demand if the price is right. Farmers and workers on both sides of the ocean suffer the consequences.

Geoff Mirelowitz
Seattle, Washington

Health-care crisis

Four years ago a *Boston Globe* reporter died at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute as a result of a chemotherapy overdose. The doctor who wrote the erroneous order was suspended and systems problems were appropriately blamed for the tragedy. However, this month 18 nurses at Dana Farber have been charged with negligence related to this episode by the Board of Registration in Nursing.

At the same time, Cathleen Kyle, who worked at Mass General Hospital for 10 years, filed suit claiming she was fired because she was a "whistleblower," calling attention to unsafe conditions as a result of cutbacks and staffing shortages.

Having recently had cardiac surgery, I can attest to the problems exposed by Kyle. Long waits for nursing assistance, a premature discharge, refusal to be readmitted as recommended by the visiting nurse, all illustrate the effects of the cutbacks and the resultant shift of responsibility for care to patients and

their families.

These problems produced by layoffs of health-care personnel, cutbacks in resources, and premature discharges are occurring at hospitals all over the country. An integral aspect of the employer's offensive against the standard of living of working people is to lay the blame on the workers if anything goes wrong, whether it's a hospital, school, factory, mine, or mill. Working people need to fight back against this scapegoating and learn in the process that it's the bosses and their system that's the source of the deepening crisis we face.

Gary Cohen
Arlington, Massachusetts

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

'Tell the truth!' Bloody Sunday marchers demand of British gov't

BY TONY HUNT
AND DOUG COOPER

DERRY, Northern Ireland—"Your demand is not about getting an apology from the British. It is not about revenge. It is about truth. It is about justice. It is about equality," Martin Ferris, a Sinn Féin leader from Kerry, in the south of Ireland, told thousands of working people rallying at Free Derry Corner in the Bogside neighborhood here January 31. Ferris and others spoke at the end of the annual demonstration, which commemorated the 27th anniversary of Bloody Sunday — the Jan. 30, 1972, massacre of 14 unarmed civil rights marchers by the British army.

While smaller than the previous two years, the march was more than 15,000 strong. Packing the streets of the working-class Catholic districts of Derry, the spirited march grew as it progressed to the rally point, close to the scene of the massacre.

Leading the way, 14 marchers carried crosses bearing the names of people killed that day; 14 others carried photos of them. Behind them, relatives and others carried photos of some of the more than 400 other Catholics and nationalists killed by British occupation forces. Uncovering the truth about these murders and winning justice for the families was a central theme of the march and a preceding day of discussion organized by the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign.

One of the many young marchers, Peter O'Neill, wanted to talk about the next steps in the fight for freedom in Ireland. "The RUC [the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the British-organized police force] has got to be disbanded," he said. O'Neill also spoke about the growing evidence of collaboration between British forces and loyalist death squads who have killed hundreds.

Last year the British government conceded a new inquiry — the Saville Inquiry — into the 1972 killings, but public hearings



Militant/Doug Cooper
Marchers in Derry, Northern Ireland, lead demonstration with photos of the 14 protesters who died on Bloody Sunday and others killed by British troops.

will not begin until at least September 1999. The fight to force London to tell the truth is "not over yet" emphasized Bloody Sunday relative Liam Way, who chaired the rally.

The British state "is not prepared to come clean and admit its part," said relative Tony Doherty. He had just returned from the January 30 march in London. Doherty stressed the inquiry was achieved by "you, the ordinary agitators of Ireland and elsewhere, returning to the streets year after year."

Alice O'Brien from Dublin, a leader of Justice for the Forgotten and the Dublin Monaghan Committee, also spoke. Her sister, brother-in-law, and their two children were killed in Dublin, in the May 17, 1974, Dublin and Monaghan bombings. Several media reports claimed that loyalists with the involvement of British police agencies planted the

bombs, which killed 33 people and wounded more than 250 — the biggest loss of life in a single day in 30 years of the struggle in Ireland. O'Brien demanded that the Dublin government release Irish police files on the incident and a tribunal be established.

A large contingent from the Garvaghy Road Residents Coalition from Portadown, who are waging a struggle against loyalist thugs, also marched. Their leader, Brendan Mac Cionnaith described to the *Militant* their continuing struggle against loyalist thugs. Gangs of up to 1,000 rightists gather nightly to intimidate and assault the small nationalist community there. The latest incident occurred February 2 when 250 loyalists, some armed with iron bars, staged a four-hour assault. Nationalists, however, were "quiet and determined. If they think

they can break our community they are mistaken," Mac Cionnaith said.

In his speech, Mac Cionnaith explained the centrality of the struggle today at Portadown and at other nationalist communities such as on the Lower Ormeau Road in Belfast. London's goal on Bloody Sunday, he said, was to crush the rising struggle for justice and equality, which had begun in Derry in 1968 and "struck a chord" among nationalists elsewhere. Having failed over 30 years to stifle this resistance, pro-British Unionist forces had turned their attention to isolated nationalist communities. "The future for justice and equality starts on the Garvaghy Road," Mac Cionnaith said, urging demonstrators to step up their support.

Doug Cooper is a member of the Maritime Union of Australia in Sydney. Julie Crawford, a member of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union in Manchester, England, contributed to this article.

BY PAMELA HOLMES

LONDON, England — "We want to see justice. It's excellent to be marching through the heart of the British establishment," said Patrick Ward, one of a group of students from Orpington College at a lively demonstration to commemorate Bloody Sunday. "No more stalling! No more cover-ups! Tell the truth now!" was the chant as some 1,200 marchers passed the Houses of Parliament. They were referring to the stalling of the British government that claims it cannot find many of the soldiers who fired the shots on Bloody Sunday.

"From what I understand there has been no justice around it. The police get away with it always," said Teresa Kanneh, a student from Goldsmiths College who was participating in her first demonstration.

The march passed the prime minister's residence, where Tony Doherty from the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign and Sinn Féin Assembly member Gerard Kelly handed in a letter to British prime minister Anthony Blair. The letter insisted that there be no whitewash in the public inquiry, and that "other victims of state violence cannot be forgotten or ignored and each of these deaths needs to be looked at."

A small group of rightists waved the Union flag and shouted Loyalist slogans. Another group appeared from a side street and attempted to attack the march. Unlike in previous years, the police intervened to hold back the rightists, aware of the growing support for Irish freedom and campaigns against cop brutality and racist attacks.

More than 700 people crowded into the end-of-march rally, which was addressed by Tony Doherty, whose father was killed on Bloody Sunday, Sinn Féin leader Gerry Kelly, and several other fighters for justice.

"No Black person can ever trust the police again after the Stephen Lawrence case," said Paul Phillippou, speaking from the Justice for Diarmuid O'Neill Campaign. Stephen Lawrence was killed by racist thugs in London for being Black and the police allowed the assailants to escape justice. Irish nationalist Diarmuid O'Neill was shot and left to bleed to death by police in London who knew he was unarmed.

Diane Hamill explained how her 25-year-old brother Robert was killed to death by Loyalists in Northern Ireland in front of an RUC patrol who did nothing.

Also speaking on the platform were Sukhdev Reel, who is campaigning to find out the truth about the death of her son following a racial attack in October 1997, and Suresh Grover from Southall Monitoring Group, which plays a prominent role in the Stephen Lawrence Family campaign.

Pamela Holmes is a member of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union.

Int'l youth meeting in Cyprus discuss world festival, fight against imperialism

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
AND RYAN KELLY

LARNACA, Cyprus — Representatives of nearly 80 organizations from 57 countries took part in meetings here January 28–February 1 to make plans for the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students and discuss other steps in building an anti-imperialist youth movement.

The 150 delegates and observers present also drew a balance sheet on the 14th world youth festival that took place in Cuba in the summer of 1997. "Through hosting that festival Cuba made its modest contribution to reshaping the international progressive and revolutionary youth movement following the collapse of the regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union almost 10 years ago," said Leyde Rodríguez Hernández. Along with Lissette Díaz Castro, secretary of international relations of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) of Cuba, Rodríguez represented the UJC at the meetings.

A number of other delegates expressed similar views. That gathering "was unprecedented," said Rasheed Ali of the Sudanese Youth Union during the February 1 meeting that focused on plans for the next festival. "In Cuba we had the first international youth festival that was self-financed by those who came. And it was the most democratic and open, in the history of the festival movement, to all those who want to fight against imperialism."

Those present at the February 1 meeting decided that the 15th world youth festival should be held in Africa, most likely Namibia. The site will be set after final con-

sultations with youth organizations, political parties, and the government there in the next three months. A number of delegates said that drawing on the lessons of the previous gathering will maximize potential for organizing young people from around the globe involved in anti-imperialist struggles to go to a meeting in Namibia.

Nearly 12,500 delegates from 133 countries—including representatives of 2,000 youth organizations from all over the world—took part in the 1997 gathering in Cuba. They exchanged experiences and discussed organizing common actions upon their return against unemployment, racism, immigrant-bashing, and other reactionary anti-working-class manifestations of the social relations reproduced by capitalism.

They discussed organizing solidarity with exploited farmers and workers resisting belt-tightening demands by the employers. And they talked about increasing support for national liberation struggles—from Palestine to Ireland, from Western Sahara to Quebec, from Cuba's intransigent refusal to relinquish its sovereignty to Korea's battle for unification. These anti-imperialist struggles occupied much of the discussion and debate at the Cyprus gathering.

WFDY General Assembly

The first part of the event here was a four-day meeting of the General Assembly of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY)—the highest decision making body of the federation. WFDY, with some 160 affiliates in more than 100 countries, is the main international organization that has

sponsored the youth festivals.

In addition to the United Democratic Youth Organization (EDON), which hosted the gathering, representatives of 19 youth organizations from 14 countries in Europe attended—the largest participation from any continent.

They included mostly youth groups affiliated to Communist Parties in the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Russia, Spain, and United Kingdom. The Bulgarian Socialist Youth Union and Young Socialists in the UK also sent representatives. The Communist Youth of Italy, affiliated to the Communist Refoundation; Young Left of Sweden; and Young Communist League of Norway—which are not members of WFDY—participated as observers.

The second largest regional delegation came from Asia. It included student groups from Bangladesh, Burma, and India; All India Youth Federation, All India Youth League, and Democratic Youth Federation of India, all affiliated to Communist Parties in that country; Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK); Korean Youth League of Japan, as well as Democratic Youth League and League of Socialist Youth of that country; several organizations from Nepal; and Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union of Vietnam.

Participants from Africa included the Organization of Revolutionary Youth of Benin, Union of Progressive Youth of Egypt, National Union of Eritrean Youth and Stu-

Continued on Page 6